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**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, SOCIETY & POLITICS
IN HERTFORDSHIRE
1918-1939**

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ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN HERTFORDSHIRE
1918-1939

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the elementary education policies of Hertfordshire county council during twenty-one years of unprecedented local change. It examines the influence of major local pressure groups, and it places county educational affairs in the wider context of wildly fluctuating national economic and political fortunes. It contends that against this uncertain background the apparently disparate developments in Hertfordshire were actually the results of coherent LEA policies which fulfilled a range of local needs.

The LEA pursued a consistent policy of vocationally-biased rural education. Far from being associated with parsimony and poor standards, this policy brought the county national fame as an educational pioneer. Vocationalism also increasingly dominated urban elementary schools. Here, too, it stemmed from a social class perspective of education which considered a particular range of manual, technical and commercial occupations the natural climax of elementary schooling. These developments served to strengthen the desire, and the opportunity, to maintain the marked distinctions between the elementary and secondary spheres.

The LEA's success owed much to its skilful accommodation to, and sometimes circumvention of, government action. Although possessing long-term objectives, it was shrewdly opportunist in its actions to secure them. The remarkably uneven distribution of urban facilities is seen as the logical, and popular, result of a county policy of devolution, the LEA making a virtue out of the self-determination local communities possessed regarding the advancement or restriction of elementary education.

(ii)

The 1936 Education Act proved both a windfall and a watershed in county affairs. It overcame the financial, political and religious impediments to expansion and reorganisation, and it heralded dramatic changes in the partnership between the LEA and local districts, and between the LEA and Anglican Diocese of St.Albans. Finally, it was instrumental in setting seals of approval and permanence on the county's interpretation of elementary education.

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Buckinghamshire Record Office, Aylesbury
Essex Record Office, Chelmsford

and, particularly,

Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford.

Without the support of my wife, I doubt whether this thesis would have been completed. To Pamela, therefore, very special thanks are given.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Administrative County
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AEC	Association of Education Committees
Ann Rep	Annual Report
ATI	Association of Technical Institutions
ATTI	Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEC	Buckinghamshire Education Committee
BL	British Library, Newspaper Library
Board	Board of Education
B of Ed	Board of Education
BRO	Buckinghamshire Record Office
CC	County Council
CE	Church of England
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CLC	County Library, Chelmsford (Essex)
Col	Column
CP	County Paper (Hertfordshire County Council)
CS	Central School
CSMO	County School Medical Officer (Hertfordshire)
DCS	Day Continuation School
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
DS	Domestic Subjects
EEC	Essex Education Committee
ERO	Essex Record Office
FBI	Federation of British Industry
FGCC	First Garden City Company (Letchworth)
FGCM	First Garden City Museum (Letchworth)
FGPSC	Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee (Hertfordshire County Council)
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HCTA	Hertfordshire County Teachers' Association
HEC	Hertfordshire Education Committee
HESC	Higher Education Sub-Committee (Hertfordshire County Council)
HHEC	Hemel Hempstead Education Committee
HHTC	Hemel Hempstead Town Council
HMI	His Majesty's Inspector
HRO	Hertfordshire Record Office
JP	Justice of the Peace
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
LEA	Local Education Authority
LU	London University, Institute of Education Library
MB	Municipal Borough
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MI	Mixed and Infants (School)
MP	Member of Parliament
N/A	Not available
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NFU(StA)	National Farmers' Union: St.Albans Branch Office
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen

ABBREVIATIONS (continued)

NUT	National Union of Teachers
NUWT	National Union of Women Teachers
PES	Public Elementary Schools
PRO	Public Record Office
PT&PI SC	Physical Training & Practical Instruction Sub-Committee (Hertfordshire County Council)
RD	Rural District
RDC	Rural District Council
SRC	Schools Reorganisation Committee (Hertfordshire County Council)
TES	<u>Times Educational Supplement</u>
UD	Urban District
UDC	Urban District Council
USA	United States of America
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WGC	Welwyn Garden City

Local Newspapers

<u>Barnet Press</u>	<u>Barnet Press, Finchley and Hendon News</u>
<u>Bucks Advertiser</u>	<u>The Buckinghamshire Advertiser and Aylesbury News</u>
<u>Citizen</u>	<u>Citizen, Letchworth</u>
<u>Herts Advertiser</u>	<u>Hertfordshire Advertiser and St.Albans Times</u>
<u>H&C Reporter</u>	<u>Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Reporter and Royston Crow</u>
<u>H&E Observer</u>	<u>Hertfordshire and Essex Observer</u>
<u>Herts Express</u>	<u>Hertfordshire Express</u>
<u>Herts Gazette</u>	<u>Hertfordshire, Hemel Hempstead Gazette</u>
<u>Herts Mercury</u>	<u>Hertfordshire Mercury</u>
<u>Herts Record</u>	<u>Hertfordshire Record</u>
<u>W.Telegraph</u>	<u>Weekly Telegraph for Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt & District</u>
<u>WH Observer</u>	<u>West Hertfordshire and Watford Observer</u>

HERTFORDSHIRE REFERENCES

References HRO HEd1 and HRO HEd2 are to school logbooks except where stated otherwise.

All references HRO HEd4 and HRO HCC2 are to county education committee and county council papers. HEd4 references are laid out as follows - HRO HEd4/26 pp190-192 HEC 9:4:20 - and the page references are to the large numerals in the top right hand corner added after each volume was bound. HCC2 volumes do not have this easy referencing system, and therefore individual CP (County Paper) numbers within each volume, and the page references within each CP, have been given - eg HRO HCC2/105 CP39 HEC 31:3:24 pp12-14.

HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOL NOMENCLATURE

During the inter-war years the designation of many Hertfordshire schools changed as a result of reorganisation schemes. Throughout this thesis the Hertfordshire usage regarding types of school has been retained:-

The term 'post-primary' includes all schools with responsibility wholly or in part for children over the age of eleven.

The designations 'senior' and 'central' apply solely to elementary schools - 'senior' to ordinary elementary schools, or departments within all-age elementary schools, for pupils over the age of eleven, and 'central' to elementary schools admitting pupils over that age selected as a result of an entrance examination. There were no non-selective central schools in the county.

The designations 'grammar' and 'modern' apply solely to secondary schools - 'grammar' to both the old and recently established secondary schools with a traditional academic curriculum, and 'modern' to those with a specific technical and commercial bias founded by the LEA in the 1930s.

KEY HERTFORDSHIRE FIGURES

Chairmen of Hertfordshire County Council

The Rt Hon Sir Thomas Halsey 1905-1920

Sir Edmund Barnard 1920-1930

Sir Joseph Priestley 1930-1939

Sir David Rutherford 1939-1946

Chairmen of the County Education Committee

Sir John Pank 1902-1923

The Rev Canon G.H.P.Glossop 1923-1925

Captain E.T.Morris 1925-1930

William Graveson 1930-1939

Clerks to the County Council

Sir Charles Longmore 1894-1930

Major P.E.Longmore 1930-1948

Chief Education Officers (in Clerk's Department)

A.J.Hallidie 1903-1926

S.W.Howe 1926-1940

County Supervisor of Handicraft

R.R.Bunn

County Supervisor of Domestic Subjects

Miss M.I.Barnes

KEY HERTFORDSHIRE FIGURES (continued)

County Medical Officer and School Medical Officer

Dr H.Hyslop Thomson 1916-1940

H.M.Inspector of Elementary Schools

E.F.D.Bloom 1919-1939

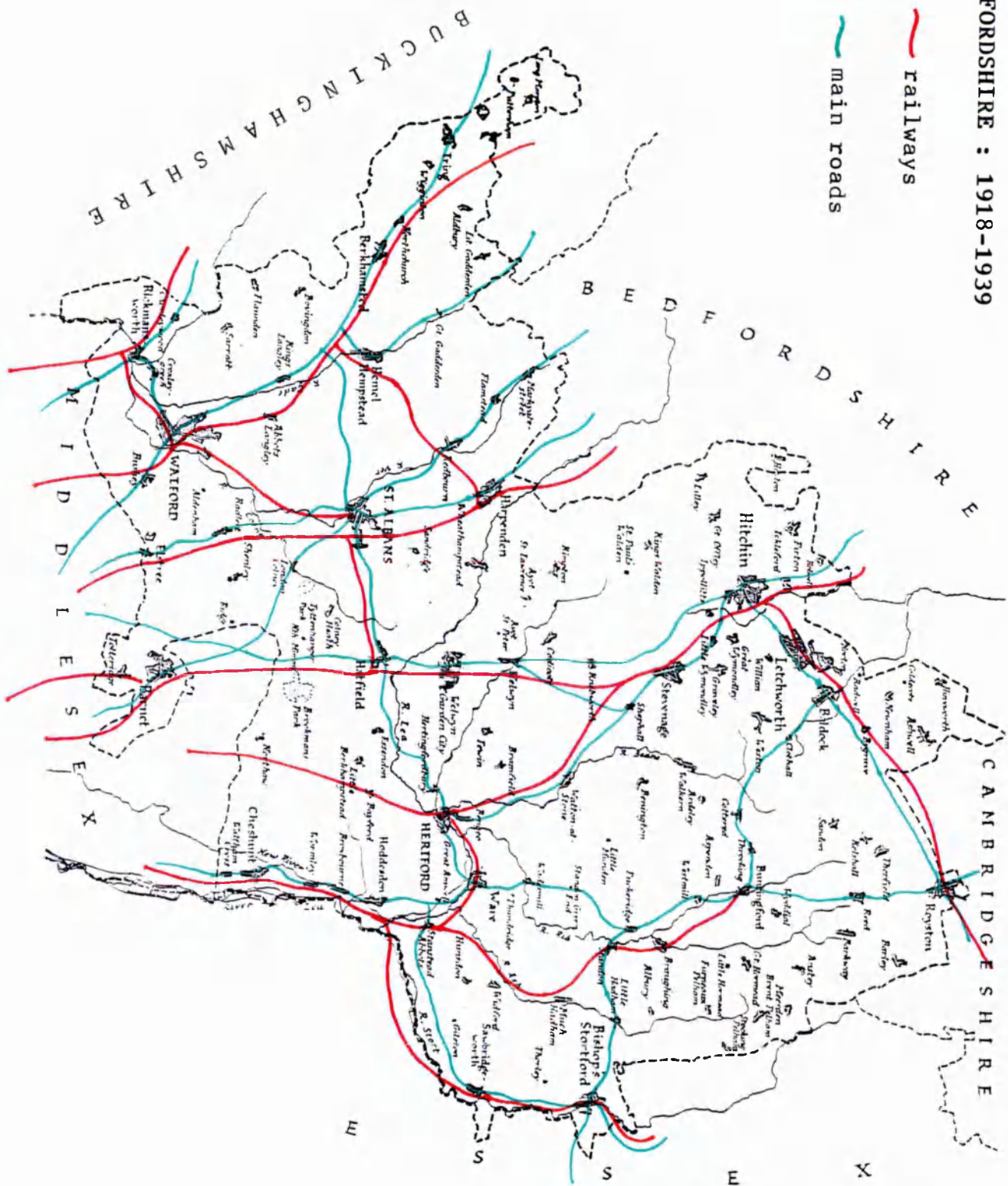
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION : THE QUESTIONS RAISED

During the late 1930s Labour county councillors in Hertfordshire condemned the majority of education committee members as reactionary and negligent.(1) For the Labour caucus, the county seemed to preserve intact the educational attitudes of the archetypal Victorian squire, farmer and parson, namely that elementary schools were institutions founded by the middle-classes for working-class children to be taught virtuous habits, useful knowledge and readily applicable skills. Labour councillors were particularly incensed that the education committee had appeared to welcome every adverse turn in the national economy as a golden opportunity to defer public expenditure. In addition, the LEA seemed to them to have been so amenable to the unreasonable aspirations of an impoverished Anglican church that the ashes of sectarian controversy had been stirred into a needless conflagration charring many reorganisation schemes.

Certainly the rural schools had remained largely unreorganised, and all possessed a marked vocational rural bias in their curriculum. Certainly, too, in urban areas the LEA made a positive virtue out of its tendency to let local towns and boroughs make most of the running in either instigating or deferring rebuilding schemes and reorganisation. However, this thesis contends that such appearances were largely deceiving. Indeed, it contends that throughout the inter-war years the county council had an elementary education policy that was positive, remarkably

consistent, very responsive to local needs, accommodated national trends, and did its best to ignore national crises.

Firstly, as HMI reports revealed, in 1939 Hertfordshire had an array of very sound rural schools, and a much praised rural education policy. The local evidence certainly casts doubt on the assertion, levelled for instance by Gerald Bernbaum and Brian Simon, that rural all-age schools wasted the time of older pupils, and were by their very existence a sure sign of educational stagnation.(2) Secondly, in urban areas there evolved diverse ranges of educational facilities which undoubtedly owed much to the particular character of each city, town or borough. Some old market centres such as Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford continued to see themselves primarily as part of the countryside surrounding them, while others such as Barnet and Watford were seeking different patterns of educational provision as they grew into major industrial and commercial conurbations. Throughout the spectrum, however, the local evidence constructs a very different picture of the inter-war years to writers such as Nigel Middleton and Sophia Weitzman, and Bernbaum, who interpret them negatively in terms of a series of barriers impeding the inevitable evolution of universal secondary education and the liberalisation of the primary school.(3) Hertfordshire's experiences also suggest that these accounts of the expansion of public education, and the more laudatory ones such as G.A.N. Lowndes' The Silent Social Revolution, fail to acknowledge the impetus given to technically biased education by the advanced courses introduced in elementary schools after 1918.(4)

Thirdly, the Dual System, which operated in very nearly all Hertfordshire towns as well as most villages, was dramatically realigned in the light of the partners' changing interests and vulnerabilities. To dismiss these years, as Simon does, as just the prolonged exercise of

ecclesiastical intransigence is to fall too completely for the claims of other self-interested contemporary parties.

(5) The 1920s and early 1930s saw constant tactical manoeuvring in most Hertfordshire towns as all parties - local councils, LEA and churches - sought maximum advantage with minimal expense. Local political and religious strengths and rivalries varied widely, but the Anglican churches became the easy and frequent butt of criticism for either negatively obstructing reorganisation proposals or aggressively seeking a disproportionately large share of the market. The evidence reveals all other parties were equally vigorous in their desires to do exactly what suited them - to avoid further expenditure, to push the Anglicans from the educational scene, or to effect an acceptable working compromise. The 1936 Education Act is seen as a major turning point in Hertfordshire's Dual System, bringing to a head the ambivalence in each partner, and dramatically changing the balance of power between them at a time of surging county growth.

Indeed, fourthly, the 1936 Education Act is seen as particularly significant for elementary education generally in Hertfordshire. Local experiences diverge considerably from many assessments of the impact of this Act, and strikingly so from Middleton and Weitzman's fundamental conclusion in their chapter "The Act That Never Was" that "the next years saw little progress".(6) Simon, too, in his concern to attack the exemption clauses, omits any examination of the impetus the Act gave to developments in LEAs generally, let alone regionally.(7) The Act was seen locally as timely, generous and apposite. In fact, its ordinariness was perceived as its greatness. It removed much of the building backlog and, because it stimulated elementary education, it allowed the existing proportion of secondary places, which had been adjudged more than adequate by the LEA, to be preserved. The second half of 1930s witnessed a tidal wave of immigration into the county, and

the Act ensured that by 1939 Hertfordshire was becoming rich in new and completely refurbished JMI and senior schools. Locally this unprecedented building programme was seen very much as the summation of elementary education policy.

The thesis shows these achievements owed much to three interwoven developments within Hertfordshire's local government. The first was the increasingly formative influence of individual county councillors and aldermen who combined a knowledge of local district needs and an appreciation of general educational trends with a mastery of local government politics, all at a time of potentially confusing county and national developments. The successive chairmen of the education committee were in this category. The second was the presence of powerful minority interests. Nonconformist, Liberal and Labour influences were strong on local councils, even if Anglican and Conservative perspectives dominated the county council. The third development was the appointment of a widening range of professional experts by the LEA. Nevertheless, the thesis argues, the education committee never abrogated power to its professional staff. Their main function was to provide the educational justification and administrative expertise for developing just the sort of practical courses and vocational bias which members wished to promote in elementary schools.

The great inter-war change was the transition from perceiving elementary education as practical training in itself, to accepting it as a general preparation, but still class-focused and limited, for the specialised training which took over from it - preferably in the final couple of years of mandatory schooling. Hertfordshire's agricultural institute and the compilers of the Rural Syllabus came to assume this, as did many of the new urban-based technical and commercial courses within the county. This vocational "twist" took place between the ages of 12 and 13, and

sometimes earlier. It led more children to stay at school after 14, and obliged the provision of increasingly sophisticated educational facilities. This in turn led the range of post-primary schools (senior, central, technical, grammar and modern) to be justified less on grounds of social class and more on a blend of children's intellectual abilities and local economic needs. Fundamentally, the thesis argues that a specifically twentieth-century orientated vocationalism was the key to virtually every development in elementary education in Hertfordshire. It never suggests matters of social class were forgotten, but it does contend that vocationalism in education became respectable, and that the range of job opportunities became the critical factor in determining the variety and the increasingly good quality of elementary school provision.

After this introduction, chapter 2 goes on to identify the major and minor social, religious and political groupings within the county, and indicates the degree to which the phenomenal demographic changes caused tensions within these groups and altered their relationships. It shows that the disparity between rural and urban interests is an important key to understanding Hertfordshire during this period. Chapters 3 and 4 identify and analyse the starkly contrasting developments in rural and urban schools, yet finds that despite their very different features, they are components of the same movement, if differently paced, towards vocationalism. These chapters also bring out the similarities as well as the differences in the LEA's attitudes and responses to a series of national and local pressures. In doing so, they lead on to chapter 5 which analyses more general issues of educational reform, retrenchment and reorganisation - but, it is hoped, benefiting from some of the particular points made earlier. Finally, as the 1936 Education Act is considered so critically important to elementary education in Hertfordshire, it merits chapter 6 largely to itself.

REFERENCES: CHAPTER ONE

1. BL Herts Mercury 12:4:35 p14 cols5-6, 26:11:37 p16 cols3-7.
2. Bernbaum, Gerald, Social Change and the Schools 1918-1944 pp43-44, Simon, Brian, The Politics of Educational Reform 1920-40 p191.
3. Bernbaum, op cit, Middleton, Nigel, & Sophia Weitzman, A Place for Everyone pp191-201.
4. Lowndes, G.A.N., The Silent Social Revolution 2nd ed pp146-168. Simon is an exception in noting this usually forgotten feature of Fisher's Act, and in linking such courses with the Consultative Committee's brief in 1923 and with government policy after its report in 1926 - Simon op cit pp20-21, 76-77 & 118-132.
5. Simon, op cit pp149-150 & 191.
6. Middleton & Weitzman, op cit pp176-201.
7. Simon, op cit pp217-224 & 310.

CHAPTER TWO

ANXIETIES AND ASPIRATIONS

THE GROWTH & GOVERNMENT OF HERTFORDSHIRE BETWEEN THE WARS

This discussion limits itself to factors affecting elementary education. It goes from the general to the particular - from overall county trends, to district diversities, to influential groups, and finally to prominent individuals - but begins, perversely, with a particular moment after World War Two has been declared.

On November 6th 1939, Sir David Rutherford, chairman of the county council, formally welcomed members to their first meeting in the new neo-Georgian county hall overlooking Hertford. The semi-circular debating chamber, symbolising the corporate rather than confrontational nature of county affairs, was adorned with a Brussels tapestry and massive silver inkstand, gifts of County Alderman Sir Lionel Faudel-Phillips of nearby Balls Park, emphasising the authority of the council and its chairman.(1)

There was a touch of irony about such symbols. Rutherford's address hinted at the equivocal nature of Hertfordshire's local government where patrician interest and a strong vein of paternalism combined uneasily with an ever-increasing burden of mandatory responsibilities and dwindling local autonomy. While, he asserted, the imposing surroundings

"will serve to remind us of the dignity of the work of the County Council and of the great generosity of one of its distinguished members",

he reassured councillors and ratepayers, the latter forever

in the minds of the former with full newspaper reports of meetings still customary, that the forum and offices had been built primarily in the cause of "greater economy and increased efficiency" in public affairs.(2) Rutherford revealed the fatalism tinged with self-righteous pride characteristic of the majority of Hertfordshire councillors, arguing that it was the inexorable extension of statutory duties thrust upon the local authorities by central government which caused it to become

"no matter for surprise that office accommodation became a patchwork that to-day is no longer suitable or worthy of the importance of our functions."(3)

It was in 1936, as the population, prosperity and rateable value of Hertfordshire soared, that "economical minds" had promoted the idea of bringing all officers, clerical staff and councillors under one roof.(4) The decision, and the lack of controversy over it, said a lot about the county at the time. The county council's ever-expanding business was conducted in cramped and scattered offices in Hertford, Hatfield, St.Albans and London, a legacy from Quarter Sessions days. Despite the improvements in main roads, the availability of public transport and the reliability of cars, the council and nearly all its sub-committees still met in the Law Society's offices in Holborn, a practice surviving from the previous century when London was more generally accessible to members than any single venue within the county. Yet Hertfordshire had successfully resisted both de facto and de jure absorption by London, and the prolonged struggle had heightened a sense of county identity - in councillors at least.(5) Primarily this took the form of a cautious welcome to controlled urban growth accompanied by an anxious interest in preserving the Hertfordshire countryside - both factors combining social and economic considerations in equal measure.(6) Certainly the county was obviously buoyant economically, with fast growing towns, numerous incoming factories, and improved communications. Nevertheless, even these silver linings hid a cloud. County

councillors had been faced with an increasingly onerous task as a burgeoning population expected a full range of mandatory services at relatively modest cost. To some extent, the Olympian aspects of the new shire hall reflected the accumulating anxieties and pressures of councillors as much as it did the county's soaring inter-war growth and wealth.

The forces making for social and economic change within Hertfordshire had been great during this period. Most fundamental was the population explosion, making urban school building as well as house building an ever-present phenomenon, and rendering town planning and educational reorganisation subjects of constant debate. In 1911 the county's population was 311,284, 20.5% more than in 1901.(7) In 1921 the figure was 333,195, a rise limited to 7% by the war.(8) Thereafter, the rate accelerated again to 20.4%, the 1931 census recording 401,206, an increase of 68,011.(9) This rate of growth was consistently in excess of the national average for England and Wales. Between 1911 and 1921 it was 40% greater, and between 1921 and 1931 it was approximately four and a half times as great, exceeded only by nearby Middlesex and Surrey, both more immediately subject to immigration pressure from London.(10) A mid-1939 estimate suggested an overall county population of 499,200, an increase of 24.4% in eight years - the highest in the country.(11) This surge in an already relentless process had important educational implications. Most significantly, it threatened to overwhelm the LEA's capacity to cope with major urban developments, especially in Watford and East Barnet, and led the 1936 Education Act to be seen as something of a local saviour.

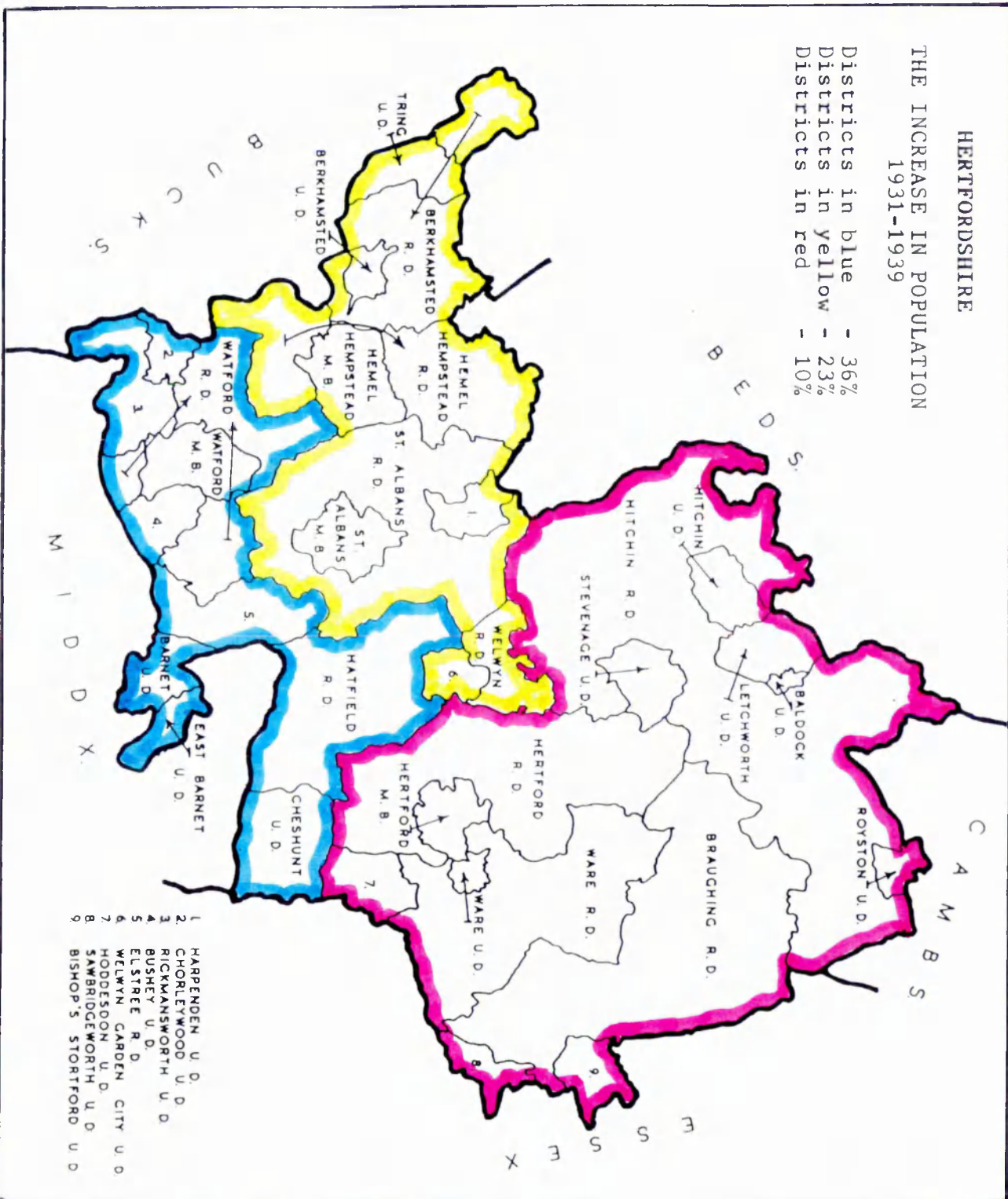
The uneven distribution of Hertfordshire's population was as striking as its overall growth. Immigration was highly concentrated. It affected districts very differently, sometimes to the point of rendering the title "rural" misleading. Those easily accessible from London grew fastest, a process accelerated in the south-west from the late 1920s, and around East Barnet from the mid 1930s, by the extension of the Underground lines. The 1939 estimate showed three distinct zones within Hertfordshire, illustrated on the map overleaf. A group of districts (ringed in blue) bordering on or extending into Greater London, partly dormitory and partly industrial, comprising the urban districts of Barnet, Bushey, Cheshunt, Chorleywood, East Barnet and Rickmansworth, the rural districts of Elstree, Hatfield and Watford, and the borough of Watford, increased their combined population by 36% since 1931.(12) An adjacent group (ringed in yellow) to the west and north, comprising the urban districts of Berkhamsted, Harpenden, Tring and Welwyn Garden City, the rural districts of Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, St.Albans and Welwyn, and the boroughs of Hemel Hempstead and St.Albans, increased by 23% - the average for the "Outer Ring" of Home Counties.(13) A more distant group (ringed in red) further east and north, comprising the urban districts of Baldock, Bishop's Stortford, Hitchin, Hoddesdon, Letchworth, Royston, Sawbridgeworth, Stevenage and Ware, the borough of Hertford, and the rural districts of Braughing, Hertford, Hitchin and Ware, increased by only 10%.(14)

Although each of these 1939 groupings contained both urban and rural districts, the overall urban-rural divide remained enormous. In 1931 the 23 boroughs and urban districts contained 70% of the people - 280,977 - in 17% of the county's area, at an average density of 4.0 an acre.(15) Of these 56,805 lived in Watford, and 28,624 in St.Albans, with the highest densities in the county at 17.5 and 10.6 respectively.(16) In striking contrast, the 13 rural

HERTFORDSHIRE

THE INCREASE IN POPULATION 1931-1939

Districts in blue - 36%
Districts in yellow - 23%
Districts in red - 10%



districts contained the remaining 30% of the population - 120,299 - thinly clustered over 83% of the land at an average density of 0.4 an acre.(17) Of greater concern to the county council was the obvious unattractiveness of country life, with the massive urban growth being accompanied by steady rural depopulation. All areas were affected, but the east and north, and far west, strikingly so. Between 1921 and 1931 three rural and three urban districts, all agriculturally dominated despite their appellations, suffered a net loss of population through migration - Royston UD -0.2%, Ware UD -2.0%, Hadham RD -2.5%, Tring UD -2.6%, Ashwell RD -3.2% and Buntingford RD -7.2%.(18) A seventh, Ware RD, barely made the positive list with +0.8%.(19) These trends existed in 1911 and still existed in 1951.(20) Such negative patterns had as dramatic an effect upon county education policies as the much more publicised urban growth.

The decennial censuses reveal the scale of change in the social and economic character of the county. Exact comparisons are sometimes difficult because of the substantial alterations in job descriptions and the composition of major categories between 1911 and 1921, although far greater consistency exists between 1921 and 1931. First, there was a slight but consistent decline in agricultural employment, including those engaged in market and estate gardening, from 22,181 in 1911 to 21,111 in 1921 and 20,320 in 1931.(21) It remained the largest single occupational group until overtaken by the commercial category in 1931. The censuses make no mention of place of employment, and as probably more of those engaged in commerce than agriculture commuted to London, it is likely that agriculture continued to be the largest single local employer throughout the period. Its importance was undoubted, but within the local National Farmers' Union and county agricultural committee its future was perpetually

held to be bleak. Joan Thirsk has charted the general bitterness and frustrations of the inter-war years which led the powerful farming lobby in Hertfordshire to exercise such determined and partisan influence upon major county policies, including education. All agricultural prices began to spiral downwards in 1921 after the Ministry of Food relinquished control over prices and markets.(22) There were several years of general losses when output prices were consistently lower than the costs incurred earlier, until prices eventually stabilised at little higher than pre-war days.(23) The numerous arable farms in the county, as elsewhere, suffered from the rising world production of grain, and the consequent price squeeze.(24) A 1929-30 Hertfordshire survey showed that only the most intensive and scientifically run arable or mixed farms made the investment worthwhile.(25) Farmers reacted by pressurising successive governments, fruitlessly, for tariff protection and agricultural subsidies, and by maintaining 60 hour working weeks and gradually reducing basic wages to an average of 28/- by 1922.(26) The lure of urban living was understandable when 28/- represented merely a 55% increase upon the pre-war average wage of 18/-, whereas the cost of living index remained 75% higher.(27)

Depopulation was the curse of the depressed Hertfordshire countryside, and certainly unemployment was much greater in the early 1930s in the expanding towns. Despite a degree of unemployment, however, the urban areas remained prosperous, largely inured against the recession by the predominance of skilled, service and commercial occupations. As the figures overleaf reveal, unemployment throughout the county in 1931 was half the national average, and well below the regional average, although higher in industrial Watford than elsewhere in the county.(28)

.....
PERCENTAGES OCCUPIED AND OUT OF WORK : 1931

	Occupied (including out of work) as % of population aged 14 and over		Out of work as % of occupied	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
England and Wales	90.5	34.2	12.7	8.6
South East	89.7	36.1	8.8	5.7
Greater London (inc in South East)	91.1	39.9	9.8	6.0
HERTFORDSHIRE	88.5	32.2	6.2	3.8
Watford	90.8	33.1	7.2	4.7

.....

Looking at long term trends in the major employment categories, Hertfordshire became increasingly dominated by essentially urban occupations, particularly commercial ones. Indoor servants remained numerous, and by 1931 the pre-war figure had been superseded, presumably to cater for the influx of middle-class families:-

1911 - 17,535
1921 - 16,095
1931 - 20,033 (29)

Most other occupations indicate Hertfordshire fast evolved into a lower middle class and skilled working class county. Those categorised as clerks, including typists and the lower grades of local and central government officers, almost quadrupled in number:-

1911 - 4,876
1921 - 13,068
1931 - 18,367 (30)

Those engaged in commerce other than as clerks, such as bank staff, retail proprietors and sales assistants, nearly doubled:-

1911 - 10,612
1921 - 13,643
1931 - 20,992 (31)

The inter-war growth in public transport, building and light industry around London is reflected in Hertfordshire's occupations. Those involved in the transport of passengers and goods grew by a third:-

1911 -	10,551	
1921 -	10,299	
1931 -	13,937	(32)

Modern industries prospered throughout the period locally. For example, those employed in heavy and light metalwork doubled:-

1911 -	4,477	
1921 -	7,464	
1931 -	9,095	(33)

The soaring demand for electrical goods, accessories and services meant numbers in this category multiplied five-fold:-

1911 -	473	
1921 -	1,319	
1931 -	2,453	(34)

The renowned Hertfordshire paper making and printing industries, largely concentrated around Hemel Hempstead and Watford, remained secure and growing sources of employment:-

1911 -	5,326	
1921 -	5,982	
1931 -	7,520	(35)

The building trade thrived, despite the depression. It employed 11,514 in 1911, and after the wartime standstill, 16,132 in 1931.(36) The proliferation of new housing estates reflected the gradations of wealth and class as well as the general growth. Between 1921 and 1931 alone, there was a 34.4% net increase in houses, the total rising from 76,159 to 102,853, and the 1951 census strongly suggests the pace accelerated later in the 1930s.(37) A few estates were luxurious, such as Moor Park and others in Tewin, Chorleywood and Park Street, but most houses in the vast speculative developments were semi-detached in form, three-bedroomed in size, pebble-dashed and mock-Tudor in finish, and catered for the lower middle-class mortgage payer.(38) Here, along with the numerous new businesses, were the tens of thousands of new properties contributing to the county's soaring rateable value which cushioned the shock of the million pound education budgets in the later 1930s. In addition, by 1930 all Hertfordshire towns possessed

substantial council housing estates, the slum problem was small compared with a decade ago, and overcrowding, at 1.2% of families in 1931, was a quarter of the national average.(39)

Little unemployment, extensive house-ownership, predominantly middle class occupations - all these features helped to produce an overwhelmingly Conservative electorate. This overall picture conceals local variations, particularly the long-lasting Liberal tradition in Hemel Hempstead and Hertford, and the rising Labour strength in Watford and the Garden Cities, but in parliamentary elections such strongholds were swamped by the surrounding Conservative support. Conservative candidates consistently played on the Hertfordshire electorate's fears of the financial and totalitarian threats posed by the Labour party, and treated the warring Liberals with mock sympathy as terminally ill. Relentlessly, Conservatives claimed to have the monopoly on patriotism.(40) Education was rarely an election issue locally, but perhaps J.C.C.Davidson, confidant of Baldwin and MP for Hemel Hempstead, summed up local attitudes best in 1929 with his recycling of the Conservative manifesto argument that publicly financed education was best seen as a series of competitive hurdles to identify academic ability for service to the nation, and

"for those who could not benefit under such a scheme they wanted to develop technical education, so that lads could go into trade equipped to be efficient in that trade."(41)

This described exactly what Hertfordshire strove to do.

Davidson had been narrowly defeated by the Liberals in Hemel Hempstead in 1923, a final reminder of past strengths and local idiosyncracies.(42) This seat, Conservative in 1922 and again from 1924, witnessed comfortable majorities for the remainder of the inter-war years, as did the other county constituencies, Hertford, Hitchin, Watford and St.Albans. Labour regained ground in 1929 after the

landslide Conservative victories of 1924, and also retrenched in 1935 after the 1931 debacle, but locally the recoveries were severely limited, leaving all five sitting members with majorities of several thousand. The slightly reduced but still substantial Hertfordshire majorities of 1935 seem to confirm the comments of Stevenson and Cook that Labour, fighting to erase the memory of Macdonald, Thomas and Snowden, to convert the electorate to nationalisation, and to persuade it of the injustice of the Means Test, recovered some of its working class vote but left the middle classes unmoved.(43) Labour failed, therefore, to capture the old Liberal voters, now without candidates in Hertfordshire, except in Hemel Hempstead, for a second general election. In 1922 Hertfordshire electors had accepted the Conservative charge that

"The truth is, of course, that the principles of the official Labour Party are Socialistic and in practice would involve an increase of State and Municipal enterprise",

and thirteen years later such thoughts, with their potentially radical and costly implications for educational change, were no less unpalatable to most voters.(44)

As Hemel Hempstead epitomised with its strong Liberal tradition, Hertfordshire contained considerable political diversity within its broadly Conservative ranks, a factor having a direct bearing upon educational attitudes, policies and developments. Throughout the period, Hemel jealously guarded its Part III Authority status, priding itself on absolute economy and mocking what it took to be county profligacy. Conversely, the increasingly Labour dominated borough of Watford, which relinquished its Part III status before 1914, was forever reassuring itself it had not made the wrong decision with constant and stridently voiced demands for more facilities, and viewing itself as the conscience of the county council. Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, too, were local forces to be reckoned with politically, each combining a radical social vision with the

determination and ability to transform at least some dreams into reality.(45) They were the source of much local suspicion and misunderstanding, and the LEA was particularly apprehensive and cautious in its dealings with each educationally orientated and potentially volatile community. Nevertheless, relationships with the LEA were virtually unclouded, and certainly very productive, not least because the cities were founded upon, and genuinely sought, cooperation not confrontation, and, more pragmatically, became singularly adept in backing irrefutable local arguments with irresistible Garden City funds. In addition, although the Garden Cities were noted for their religious tolerance, elsewhere in urban Hertfordshire - notably, but not exclusively, Hitchin, Berkhamsted and Cheshunt - past and present educational developments emphasised the frequently incendiary nature of sectarian relationships. In a significant statement in 1925, Edmund Barnard, county council chairman, tacitly acknowledged the force of such local diversities by praising them as positive virtues which had determined the council's long-established practice of

"never trying to dictate or to lead, but trying to accompany the local authorities in all matters which were for the common good of all."(46)

By "local authorities" he meant the town, city, borough and district councils, and also the local education sub-committees, with members nominated by the county council, local councils and elementary school managers, which the LEA had established in 1902 to help implement its decisions, especially regarding school attendance, and offer it advice.

In 1931 a railway clerk from Welwyn Garden City, G.S. (later Lord) Lindgren, became the first Labour county councillor in Hertfordshire. In 1932 he was joined by H.J.Bridger and T.R.Clark from Watford, and after the 1937 elections the caucus numbered seven. To the majority's mixed amusement and disgust, they announced a new era in county affairs by declaring themselves the "official opposition."(47)

Lindgren himself certainly posed a disconcerting intellectual challenge to majority assumptions about most council policies, and education was high on his list of priorities. Behind every decision, he saw outmoded attitudes. Soon after his election, he summarised his party's perception of the majority view of the nature and purpose of local government. In 1932 Viscount Knutsford took some comfort from the "pretty good result" that "of the 48 counties in England ... 42 exceeded Hertfordshire in the cost of education", but nevertheless, along with the Marquis of Salisbury, persistently urged greater economies.(48) Such assertions as these led Lindgren to pinpoint the blend of public parsimony and private generosity which seemed to characterise the provision of services and facilities in the county, and to give notice of the mounting dissatisfaction with the class dominance and vagaries such practices perpetuated. With contempt he counter-asserted

"that in almost every department of the County Council the minimum required by the legislation of the Central Authority had been the maximum of Hertfordshire, and that standard only adopted after pressure - sometimes considerable pressure - from the various ministerial departments."(49)

Throughout the decade Lindgren and the Labour caucus were treated with ineffable politeness and patience by council and committee chairmen, but effectively ignored. Although they represented two vociferous and, from 1937, Labour controlled towns - Watford and Welwyn Garden City - they presented no real threat to overall county policies. The Labour Opposition still faced fifty-nine nominally Independent members, most Conservative but some still Liberal in outlook. In addition, outside these two towns, Labour remained very much a minority and patchy presence, and was probably in decline during the late 1930s with district council voting trends matching the county council and parliamentary ones. For example, by 1936 Labour had lost all its seats on Barnet, East Barnet and Friern Barnet UDCs, and despite its obvious hopes it failed to advance in

Baldock, Letchworth or Hitchin in 1937, or Ware or Stevenage in 1938.(50)

Far less doctrinaire and overtly political than Lindgren, but far more representative of urban county councillors generally, was Harold Fern of Barnet. Like others such as Arthur Stride, Sir David Rutherford, and two chairmen of the education committee - Sir John Pank and William Graveson - Fern was a businessman, but wealthy and leisured enough to devote considerable time to council and urban district affairs.(51) Fern was on the county education committee, and chairman of the important Physical Training and Practical Instruction sub-committee from its inception in 1919 until 1936. Much absorbed with ensuring fast-growing Barnet had the full range of schools, Fern nevertheless advocated a strong practical and commercial bias as best suited to the borough's needs. In this essentially pragmatic and vocational view of education he was at one with most other county councillors. And like other councillors, notably William Graveson in Hertford, Fern was not at all dissatisfied when providing the full range of local schools meant building a new grammar school and using its superannuated premises for senior elementary classes. Paradoxically, however, it was urban councillors such as Fern, espousing so avidly the cause of advanced elementary instruction, who expedited developments in the 1930s which blurred some of the distinctions between secondary and senior elementary education. Regarding educational outcomes Fern and Lindgren had much in common. It was the widening range and increased availability of facilities which was important to them, not parity of esteem between the institutions in which they were situated.

The landowning and patrician element in Hertfordshire local government did not overtly oppose urban interests, but it certainly perceived them as the vanguard of much detested

"state socialism". The fourth Marquis of Salisbury spoke frequently at county council meetings, invariably advocating savage economies in public expenditure while at the same time privately building several hundred modern houses for his employees and contributing handsomely to his local church school refurbishment fund.(52) Lord David Cecil remarked that his father's Conservatism was

"against the new kind and very much in favour
of the old: feudal, paternal, traditional",

and indeed, as intimated earlier, he personified that blend of public parsimony and private benefaction opposed by Lindgren for frustrating an equitable distribution of facilities and services.(53) Nevertheless, Lindgren was mistaken in thinking Salisbury also personified county council practice. Although listened to with great respect, and perhaps saying what other councillors privately thought, the marquis represented as extreme a position as Lindgren himself. Salisbury's diatribes were acknowledged far more sympathetically, but they were also cast aside as unrealistic. Viscount Knutsford, an aggressive and volatile Gladstonian Liberal, was another grandee who travelled down the same Hertfordshire cul-de-sac in his life-long devotion to extreme public parsimony and the virtues of private charity.(54)

Hertfordshire landowners were very successful in the active promotion of advantageous rural policies. The Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Lytton and the Earl of Verulam let numerous farms to tenants influential in their own right. Lytton took an exceptional interest in all aspects of rural regeneration, and Verulam as well as Salisbury and Knutsford regularly attended county agricultural committee meetings as well as those of the full council.(55) Other wealthy families possessed fewer acres, but still maintained a strong voice in county affairs. The Earl of Clarendon, the Earl of Strafford, the 1st and 2nd Barons Brouncker, Sir Frederick Halsey Bt, Sir Lionel Faudell-Phillips Bt, Sir Charles Hadden, Sir Cecil Neumann, Edmund Barnard and

Colonel Abel Smith all possessed country estates, all attended council meetings, all were local benefactors, and all were actively involved in county agricultural circles and committees.(56) Throughout the period it continued to be made easy for such families to be represented on the county council. It remained customary for heads of major families to be invited to fill the next aldermanic vacancy after inheriting the estates, and even to become a county councillor involved no loss of dignity as no well-known members had their elections contested. In 1921 Sir Charles Hadden was unusual only in emphasising very publicly that he accepted his initial nomination in the agricultural interest on condition he was unopposed.(57) Indeed, as late as 1937, when Labour mounted its greatest campaign for seats, thirty-five of the forty-seven sitting members were returned unopposed.(58)

Hertfordshire was not dissimilar to other shires in retaining this accumulation of landowners and major farmers on county committees. Nevertheless, the six landed peers on the county council recorded in both 1920 and 1930 represents a relatively high proportion, for one small county, of the 93 and 71 noble county councillors identified throughout England in those two sample years by Keith-Lucas and Richards. The Hertfordshire evidence does nothing to support their argument that the number and interest of such figures was declining.(59) When the knights, baronets and untitled gentry listed in the previous paragraph are added to the peers, the Hertfordshire landowning strength on the county council becomes impressive, and particularly significant bearing in mind the increasingly urban and metropolitan nature of many southern districts. J.M. Lee has studied Cheshire, where rapid urban developments similarly invaded a county dominated by landowners, although much earlier. Lee's findings that the great landowners subsequently drifted away from county council attendance, partly because of the demands of the work and partly because

of the arrival of parvenu urban councillors, does not hold true for Hertfordshire.(60) Here they continued to turn up in some force to committee and council meetings, with much to say about spending too little on agriculture, too much on main roads, and providing the wrong sort of elementary education.

The rural and agricultural interest was preserved also by another large and influential group of long-serving county councillors and aldermen - the working farmers, owning and renting major holdings, and much absorbed with their financial plight. Among them were H.R.G.Crauford of Aldbury, C.E.Wodehouse of Hertingfordbury, G.H.Bushby of Falcon Hall, Wormley, Harry Cox of Great Havers, W.A.Fordham of Ashwell, A.J.Bowlby of Gilston Park, H.W.Hall of Benington Park, and Captain E.T.Morris of Buckland. Their social standing was often high; many were village squires, and most were JPs. They were very well represented on the education committee, and formed a powerful pressure group contributing much to policies complementing those of the agricultural committee. Such overlapping policies, in their turn, were assured of considerable support in full council meetings. Personalities influence as well as exemplify trends and attitudes, and none more so than determined council and committee chairmen. Between 1921 and 1930 the county council chairman was Edmund Barnard, gentleman-farmer, knighted in 1928, and ex-chairman of the agricultural committee, whose family had long patronised two Hertfordshire village schools near their estates.(61) Between 1925 and 1930 another farmer, Captain Morris, was chairman of the education committee, combining this role with membership of several national NFU committees, and becoming national NFU chairman in 1930.(62) It is hardly surprising that agricultural interests, at a time of bitterly felt depression, played such a significant part in the making of rural education policies. The educational times were to prove oddly propitious for the farmers.



Sir Edmund Barnard
Chairman: Hertfordshire County Council 1920-30
(NFU Record: Herts Edition Feb 1930 p117)



Captain E.T. Morris
Chairman: Hertfordshire Education Committee 1925-30
(Photograph on boardroom wall NFU St. Albans)

As noted earlier, party politics did not enter council debates overtly until the arrival of Lindgren, and then proved of nuisance value only regarding education. Although there is no evidence that the following sequence was anything but chance, the county council was chaired alternately by Conservative and Liberal members - Sir Thomas Halsey (Conservative) 1906-21, Sir Edmund Barnard (Liberal) 1921-30, and Sir Joseph Priestley (Conservative) 1930-38 - and the same was true of the education committee - Sir John Pank (Conservative) 1902-23, Canon G.H.P. Glossop (Liberal) 1923-25, Captain Morris (Conservative) 1925-30, and William Graveson (Liberal) 1930-39. More significant than party labels were the obvious ability and stature of all these men, and, notwithstanding the possibility of lobbying, the unanimity of their election and invariable re-election. Their occasional humorous references to different personal political convictions served mainly to re-emphasise the unity of members over most local concerns.(63) The primary area of disagreement on the education committee was the pace of educational developments - their direction was generally agreed. Indeed, although Pank, Glossop, Morris and Graveson had remarkably different backgrounds - the first a self-made businessman, the second an Anglican priest and diocesan administrator, the third an ex-Army officer and farmer, the fourth a draper and devoted Quaker - all promoted the strong bias in rural education, and conversely, all strove, with a marked degree of success, to avoid any bias whatsoever in steering the LEA through the shoals of sectarian controversy.(64) Their chairmanships were a tribute to their singularly effective embodiment of majority opinion.

County autonomy was highly prized throughout the period, perhaps because it was so frequently threatened by the territorial ambitions of London County Council and the impositions of central government departments. Despite the growing burden and complexity of work, education committee



Sir John Pank
Chairman: Hertfordshire Education Committee 1902-23
(BL Herts Advertiser 31:1:20 p8)



The Revd. Canon G.H.P. Glossop
Chairman: Hertfordshire Education Committee 1923-25
(BL Herts Advertiser 13:6:25 p6)

members never shared some other LEAs' predilection for pioneering and domineering county education officers. Several significant incidents over the years highlight not only the nature of Hertfordshire's educational administration, but also the fact that its policy decisions were deliberately kept out of the hands of such "experts". Since the inception of the county council, its decisions had been informed by Sir Charles Longmore, Clerk of the Council and Clerk of the Peace, and then implemented through his family firm of solicitors.(65) President of the Law Society, on the advisory committee of the Ministry of Health, well acquainted with senior civil servants, and a KCB since 1911, Longmore had acquired immense personal prestige and a social position at least equalling that of his close friend Barnard.(66) County newspapers and council reports show he combined shrewd legal advice with a cautious ear to public opinion and a sympathetic eye on council preferences. In 1920 for example, in a rare interview, Longmore revealed a degree of local accommodation in action by affirming that most councillors found recent educational legislation "rather advanced", but had specifically bowed to Labour pressures to tighten up the part-time employment bye-laws.(67) In 1926 he ensured one local tradition survived unscathed by arranging for S.W.Howe, for twenty years an assistant solicitor in his office, to replace the retiring chief education officer, A.J.Hallidie. There were no advertisements, no other candidates, merely Longmore's advice to the education committee that

"the real essentials for the post of Education Officer are experience, tact and common sense to cope with the various contingencies which daily present themselves." (68)

The appointment was no doubt hastened by his accompanying statement that Howe's promotion would enable staff redeployments and reductions to be effected, saving £1,205 a year.(69) Until 1940 Hertfordshire's chief education officers remained in the Clerk's department, and firmly under his direction.



Sir Charles Longmore
Clerk to Hertfordshire County Council 1894-1930
(NFU Record: Herts Edition Feb 1930 p117)



Left - William Graveson: Chairman of Hertfordshire Education
Committee 1930-39
Far Right - S.W.Howe: Chief Education Officer 1926-40
Next to Howe - R.R.Bunn: Supervisor of Handicraft
(BL H&C Reporter 27:10:33 p6)

Longmore died in 1930, but Howe fully justified his superior's confidence, perpetuating until 1940 Hallidie's role as an efficient executor of policy, offering detailed advice when requested, but never revealing any sign that his post might involve initiating changes in either educational direction or pace. In 1939 the iconoclastic John Newsom was confirmed as Howe's successor, an appointment suggested by the Board of Education itself. That this was a reflection of its jaundiced view of Howe's limited vision and subservience is revealed in a gleeful internal memorandum received by E.F.D.Bloom, the Hertfordshire Divisional HMI, prophesying that

"when Mr. Newsom gets into his stride, I think there will be a radical reorganisation of the County Education Office."(70)

Even in 1926, as V.C.Greenhalgh's sampling has shown, Howe was among a very small number of chief education officers - 5.5% - without any teaching experience prior to appointment. (71) That the county council had remained perfectly satisfied with such public servants was made very clear by its chairman, Sir Joseph Priestley, in 1938. Praising the loyalty and diligence of the long-serving senior officers - accountant, land agent, surveyor and education officer - he noted, with approval, that all of them were

"legacies from Sir Charles Longmore, brought up by him in his tradition."(72)

He could have added that the Longmore tradition and influence had lasted four generations, Sir Charles taking over from his father and grandfather, County Treasurers since mid-Victorian days, and his son succeeding immediately and unchallenged to his accumulated local offices in 1930.(73) More than all the examples cited by Keith-Lucas and Richards, and Lee, in their studies of local government, the Longmore dynasty became an indispensable county institution, much honoured and trusted for representing, in all senses of the word, the more traditional majority interests as they adjusted to changing times.(74)

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53. Cecil, Lord David, The Cecils of Hatfield House p271; BL Herts Advertiser 6:3:20 p8 cols1-3.
54. Who Was Who Vol3; BL Herts Advertiser 27:12:19 p6 cols3-4.

55. BL Herts Advertiser 9:10:31 p8 col6; DNB 1941-50 pp118-120. In addition, local newspapers listed the names of those attending meetings as a prelude to reports.
56. Roberts, F.C., Obituaries from The Times 1951-60 pp146-147, Who's Who in Hertfordshire 1936 pp1, 24, 150-151 & 194-195; Who Was Who Vols3,4 & 6.
57. BL WH Observer 1:1:21 p10 cols6-7.
58. Ibid., 12:3:37 p8 cols3-5; Herts Mercury 12:3:37 p6 cols4-5, 19:3:37 p10 cols4-6.
59. Keith-Lucas, Bryan, & Peter G.Richards A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century pp98-102.
60. Lee, J.M., Social Leaders & Public Persons: A Study of County Government in Cheshire since 1888 pp72-74 & 80.
61. BL Herts Mercury 7:1:28 p10 cols2-3; NFU NFU Record: Herts Edition Feb 1930 p117; Waterson, Mary, The Story of Sawbridgeworth: A Century of Village Schooling pp6-7.
62. Reading University Rural History Centre, Captain Morris file; NFU(StA) The Hertfordshire Farmer 15:10:68 p145.
63. BL Herts Advertiser 7:2:20 p8 cols1-3, 13:3:20 p8 cols1-3, 13:6:25 p6 cols3-5.
64. Ibid., 31:1:20 p8 cols1-3, 13:6:25 p8 cols3-5, 13:3:20 p8 cols1-3; Herts Mercury 4:8:39 p2 cols3-7; Reading University Rural History Centre: Captain Morris file.
65. BL Herts Advertiser 24:1:20 p10 cols1-5.
66. Ibid., and 11:7:25 p19 cols1-4; NFU(StA) NFU Record: Herts Edition Feb 1930 p117.
67. BL Herts Advertiser 24:1:20 p10 cols1-5.
68. HRO HCC2/113 CP45 HEC 29:3:26 pp13-16.
69. Ibid., p15.
70. PRO ED60/397 B of Ed memorandum, numbered E17B/1/47, from G.Rumble to E.F.D.Bloom, dated 16:7:40. Newsom was a protege of Sir John Maud.
71. Greenhalgh, V.C., 'Local Educational Administrators 1870-1974: The Emergence and Growth of a Profession', PhD Univ. of Leeds, 1974 p163.
72. BL Herts Advertiser 25:2:38 p9 col1.

73. Ibid., 24:1:20 p10 cols1-5, 16:5:30 p8 cols2&5.

74. Keith-Lucas & Richards, op cit pp102-104; Lee op cit pp69-71 & 125-126.

CHAPTER THREE

BIAS & VOCATIONALISM IN RURAL EDUCATION

(i)

"A TASTE FOR COUNTRY LIFE"

THE RURAL BIAS : EARLY POST-WAR INITIATIVES

The acute wartime concern for increased agricultural production had given a new lease of life to the old argument that elementary education should prepare children for an externally imposed station in life rather than give them ideas above it.(1) In Hertfordshire the strength of the agricultural interest in county affairs had been demonstrated by the ease and extent to which the school attendance bye-laws had been subverted by the LEA to rural employers' advantage. This had alarmed the Board of Education, but overall national needs resulted in government equivocation and no clear directives to desist. Although the Armistice and Education Act ended the blatant indulgence of sectional interests in elementary education, the education committee seized readily and vigorously the continuing opportunities for pursuing local educational policies conducive to rural employment. The agricultural interest in Hertfordshire remained well-represented on county committees throughout the inter-war decades, and its members' attitudes towards elementary education did not change fundamentally - they merely perfected the art of using disparate educational arguments to their advantage. In many respects national educational trends, too, worked to

rural employers' advantage after the war, and Hertfordshire farmers and landowners were well aware of it.

Circumstances in the early 1920s combined to leave rural schools in Hertfordshire peculiarly vulnerable to criticism, and without a clear sense of purpose amidst the increasing national concern for the future of English country life and the role of rural schools in shaping that future. To a large extent this was a common trend. In 1919, for example, many rural teachers were felt to be so out of touch with curriculum developments that HMI organised annual summer courses for them.(2) By 1926 the Board of Education had become more obviously concerned with the rural environment as a whole, justifying its residential courses as offsetting the enervating circumstances increasingly faced by isolated rural teachers as

"The exodus from the country side - too often of the brighter elements - has tended to make the human environment of the pupils unreasonably dull. There is often too little variety, movement and energy in country life."(3)

The 1918 Education Act, with its demand for advanced instruction and continuation schools, presented LEAs with the dilemma of whether they should provide central schools for older pupils from groups of rural schools, or send peripatetic teachers to undertake specialist work in individual villages.(4) This question also involved the crucial issue of the degree of vocational bias to be incorporated into the new courses. H.A.L.Fisher, speaking on the educational estimates in 1917, had recognised the problem but contributed to the confusion out of which LEAs could formulate their own particular solutions. Undoubtedly he saw schools as major bulwarks against rural depopulation, but not as conditioners of human fodder for use by farmers. In detailed argument, however, the clarity of this division became obscured. Fisher cited the fact that three-quarters of village children eventually migrated

to towns to commend the formulation of curricula which would counter criticisms of rural schools' excessive devotion to textbooks, and their neglect of outdoor education, while not pandering to the farming lobby's demands for a more utilitarian rural syllabus. Nevertheless he wished to perpetuate the Board of Education's wartime links with - if not its wartime subservience to - the Ministry of Agriculture in promoting in country schools

"a taste for country life, an interest in all the common sights and sounds of the countryside, and an intelligent use of all its various opportunities."(5)

In Hertfordshire the balance promulgated by Fisher was never perceived as axiomatic, and there was no shortage of conflicting advice for education committee members to consider in their response to the new Education Act as interested parties all seized the chance to influence decisions. At meetings across the county, views ranged from the establishment of a series of identical urban-based continuation schools drawing pupils from both the town and surrounding countryside to the provision of a decentralised system of infinite variety sensitive "to the special needs of the locality", including the limitation of rural continuation classes to winter when workers were in less demand.(6) More generally, however, whether the emphasis was upon common educational experiences or district diversity, there was broad agreement that elementary education should be in close touch with the children's surroundings. Certainly Spencer Holland's aphorism at a Hertfordshire NUT conference that in country areas this environmentally based education "might well be rural without being agricultural" summed up the aspirations of local teachers.(7)

In October 1920, sensing the appropriateness of the moment, the Hertfordshire branch of the NFU sent a resolution to the

county education committee urging that the education provided in all rural schools, not just continuation classes, "shall have a distinctly rural bias", and re-emphasised the agricultural interests' long-standing complaint that elementary schools educated children to scorn farming pursuits.(8) This resolution struck a sympathetic chord, and spurred the LEA into action. Indeed, a new and close local partnership was publicly forged, reflecting the common interests of many councillors as well as the avowed links between government departments. Sir Charles Longmore wholeheartedly agreed with the NFU, and did not refrain from informing education committee members that

"all teaching must be based upon what is already in the minds of the children and must draw its illustrations from their daily experience."(9)

The education committee concurred, and gave immediate notice that the chief education officer and HMI Bloom would be issuing advice on appropriate textbooks, that all rural schools should have properly equipped gardens, and that to fulfil the Elementary Code all syllabuses should have

"special reference to the surroundings of the scholars, the natural and historical features, and plant life of the locality, and the industries of the inhabitants."(10)

Local studies, farm visits, nature study, gardening, animal husbandry, rural crafts, rural poetry and literature, country traditions, and practical Mathematics were to be key features in school life.

This policy decision, although in retrospect signalling the first strategic moves by the powerful post-war alliance of agricultural and educational interests in the county, was undoubtedly in tune with the times. As we have seen, HMI and teachers were sympathetic to more lively educational approaches in general, and in environmental studies in particular. In July 1919, at the behest of the Earl of Lytton, the county council had voted £300 to allow 25 schools selected by the chief education officer - Hallidie - and Bloom to undertake a detailed and comprehensive study of

their local environment under the auspices of the County Museum.(11) These much publicised Regional Surveys, with their emphasis upon the development of interest in rural churches, markets, farms, crafts and traditions, represented the interwoven historic, patriotic and aesthetic threads of the resurgent concern for the countryside. As Lytton himself emphasised, their objectives were nothing less than the restoration of national pride and the stemming of rural depopulation through "a more subtle and sympathetic appreciation of the lure of the countryside."(12)

It is significant that the Regional Survey's popularity with headteachers, combined with the support of Lytton, Hallidie and a powerful caucus on the education committee, led to a combined outcry which rendered shortlived the county finance committee's decision to discontinue the grant during the economic crisis of 1921.(13) The fact the grant was actually lost for a year, but then restored, is an indicator of the powerful but disparate forces at work. The setback revealed the initially confused and uneasy links between those fearful for the future of agriculture, those concerned at the decay of village life and the decline of rural crafts and skills, those convinced of the educational value of practical outdoor studies, and those beginning to envisage a mutually beneficial partnership between rural schools and employers. The restoration signified the belated recognition that these interests were more complementary than conflicting. (14)

The early years of the 1920s witnessed the belated recognition of the worth of another initiative - the county's nascent agricultural institute recently established at Oaklands, near St.Albans, to provide courses for intending farmers and skilled farm workers. In 1921 its future seemed bleak under a storm of county councillors' criticisms stemming partly from frustration at government

pressure to initiate such projects, partly from the institute's ominous implications for ratepayers despite Treasury grants, and partly from hazy perceptions of its contribution to Hertfordshire's agricultural and educational affairs. Farmers and landowners on the county council wrestled with questions of public investment in agricultural education, and, more pragmatically, how extensive the range of courses should be, and whether the staff should be expanded to include horticulture, poultry keeping and dairying - all prominent occupations in the county.(15) In the end not only was closure avoided but expansion agreed, and it was significant that the seeds of the institute's strong links with elementary schools were sown in this acrimonious debate. Expansion was justified largely on the grounds that the vocational opportunities Oaklands might afford elementary children offset to some extent "the huge sums being given to grammar schools and secondary education."(16) Such arguments effectively countered the objections of those suspicious of the agricultural lobby's sudden enthusiasm for particular educational developments. Captain Morris, for example, who had extensive farm holdings in the county, was customarily unsympathetic to expenditure on elementary education, but became a vociferous advocate of subsidised agricultural education and the expansion of Oaklands, despite the recession, because of its benefits for "people who were in no better position than the large majority of those for whom they provided secondary education on a generous scale."(17)

Henceforth Oaklands' policy was survival through a high profile identification and satisfaction of market needs. Through vigorous self-promotion, it rapidly became an integral part of the accelerating movement to impart a significant vocational bias to elementary education in rural schools. The process was accumulative and to a large extent soon became self-perpetuating. In 1923 it launched elementary teachers' weekend and summer courses, and hosted visits by elementary schools.(18) In 1924 the principal

shrewdly promoted a new and comprehensive policy for the institute. His aim was to offset the lure of earning money in a dead-end job at fourteen by bringing the greater attractions of Oaklands' courses to the constant attention of teachers and pupils, and by giving teachers sufficient knowledge and confidence to ingrain in children the joys of rural living and the satisfaction of rural occupations.(19) The institute widened its teachers' courses to include Nature Study, Rural Science and Agricultural History, sent staff to give lantern lectures in schools, and created preparatory courses for children aged 14 to whet their appetites for more specialised agricultural education at 16.(20) The first two developments were instantly successful, and by April 1926 the county agricultural and education committees, with the active encouragement of Hallidie and the Hertfordshire County Teachers' Association (HCTA), had arrived at a scheme of maintenance grants, accompanied by subsidised residential courses at Oaklands, for children aged 14 who had committed themselves to farming careers, and whose parents were engaged in agricultural occupations. The scheme sought to secure young skilled farm workers by providing a further year's schooling with a rural bias, followed by a year's combined agricultural work on an approved farm and evening classes, followed finally by the residential course at Oaklands at sixteen.(21)

Alongside these developments were others equally calculated to revitalise interest in the countryside, and restore prestige to rural occupations. They, too, had the consistent support of well-informed and influential chairmen of the education committee. In 1922 the Board of Education commissioned specialists to undertake lecture tours on aspects of local studies. HMI Bloom verified their popularity in Hertfordshire, a factor contributing to the county council's decision in 1923 to underwrite the costs of compiling and publishing a school manual on the Natural History and Geography of Hertfordshire.(22) This appeared

in 1925, sold well, and was firmly established in county syllabuses by 1927.(23) Canon Glossop and William Graveson were key figures in the burgeoning movement to stimulate children's interests in the country through both the Regional Surveys and books written at their level of understanding. Glossop personally subsidised several Regional Surveys during the year without grant, and Graveson, in addition to writing part of the new school manual, lost no opportunity in council debates, in county newspapers, at prizegivings, and when opening new schools, to promote "county patriotism" in children, a concept virtually synonymous with an appreciation of, and respect for, the Hertfordshire countryside and its traditions.(24) For interwoven reasons of cultural heritage, national pride and rural regeneration, both were also keen advocates of the circulating libraries which operated in rural Hertfordshire, with Carnegie Trust and county council grants, from March 1925, usually with the school and teacher acting as library and honorary librarian.(25)

The libraries, the Hertfordshire book, the Oaklands programme, the Regional Surveys, the teachers' meetings and HMI courses all prospered throughout the inter-war years, but at their inception in the early 1920s they were manifestations of a new and widespread desire to promote a specifically rural type of education. The purpose behind this education varied. To some, mainly teachers and HMI Bloom, it was a stimulating method of instruction combining practical activities and the integration of subjects. To some, epitomised by Lytton, Glossop and Graveson, it represented a means of preserving important features of the national and local heritage. To others, such as Captain Morris and most Hertfordshire farmers, it was all these things - and more. As the next section shows, it afforded the opportunity to stem the decay of rural communities, to formulate a curriculum with particular strengths, to produce school-leavers with interests and skills readily applicable

to rural occupations, and to create a pool of teachers conditioned by that same rural bias. Under the guise of modernity, during the later half of the 1920s and throughout the 1930s it was these latter objectives which Hertfordshire's education committee single-mindedly set out to achieve. A generation earlier rural employers had derided village schools, but now they were hailed as the means of social, cultural and, above all, economic regeneration.

(ii)

**"A CERTAIN NATURAL CONNECTION
BETWEEN EDUCATION AND VOCATION"**

CAPTAIN MORRIS & THE HERTFORDSHIRE RURAL SYLLABUS

The idea of an approved Hertfordshire Rural Syllabus originated with Captain Morris, local farmer and chairman of the county education committee 1925-30. He saw it as a means of developing and coordinating a variety of outdoor activities already under way in schools, and ensuring they contributed more effectively to a revitalisation of rural life, but particularly agriculture.(26) Morris indicated that the NFU, of which he was a key local and national figure, was closely involved in the formulation of the Syllabus, and that it had been approved by the Committee of the National Council of Agriculture.(27) The local content and educational processes were worked out by a county sub-committee which included teachers, farmers, HMI, education officers, and the principal of Oaklands.(28) The end product, first published in February 1927, revealed the various hands involved in its compilation. Although in many ways it merely approved and harmonised current educational developments, the overall encouragement, sanctioning and intensification of efforts in specific agricultural and vocational directions were new and very clear.

Certainly the Rural Syllabus grew out of the resurgent criticisms of the inappropriateness of aspects of elementary education for country children. In 1922 the recession was

used to resurrect the view that a strictly targeted vocational education was vital for the taxpayer in the short-term and for the country in the long-term. One local newspaper made much of the NUT's confession that rural education was "too bookish and towny", and, assuming the interests of agriculture were synonymous with those of the pupil, it concluded that the village schoolboy

"is wasting time which might be profitably spent in becoming acquainted with the things that will matter in his after-life."(29)

With politically charged rhetoric, Rear Admiral Murray Sueter, Conservative MP for Hertford, promulgated similar simplistic ideas regarding vocationally biased rural education:-

"Surely [children] would do better if trained properly in practical work as pig and cow-keeping and general agricultural work, than pumping into their heads "Shakespeare", that I see is Mr.Fisher's latest craze at the taxpayer's expense."(30)

However, Board of Education Pamphlet No.46, Rural Education, published in January 1926, probably had a more positive effect upon local events, although it is not mentioned specifically in county papers or press reports. It certainly made points reiterated in Hertfordshire by Morris about using the local environment "to lend reality to the teaching and to arouse interest in country life and pursuits."(31) Other encouraging passages were unlikely to have been missed. Whilst the pamphlet denigrated vocational training in school, it effectively blurred its definition, and thereby its distinction from education, with the argument that many practical crafts and skills

"are equally valuable in urban and in rural schools, but in rural schools they have perhaps a more direct bearing upon everyday life, their practical utility is more evident, and there is therefore, in this sense, a certain natural connection between education and vocation."(32)

With characteristic bluntness Morris made the advantages crystal clear, asserting that as a result of the Rural

Syllabus if children

"settled on the farms they became better workers. If they went to towns they would take with them a knowledge of the countryside, and a love for the country. If they settled in the Colonies it would fit them better for the Colonies, and make them better citizens."(33)

The Board saw the rural bias permeating and enriching most subjects of the curriculum. Pamphlet 46 linked the processes by which subjects were taught to a content that was essentially but not exclusively rural. Science included plant and animal studies, elementary mechanics, and the properties of air, water and soil. It subsumed all aspects of gardening, which in turn commissioned the articles produced in Handicraft lessons and provided many of the subjects for Drawing. Aspects of Mathematics were taught through school garden accounts and scale plans, and through mapwork and an analysis of local markets. Parts of the Domestic Science course would concentrate upon dairy products, herbs and the preservation of local fruits. Geography was studied partly through the local climate, physical features, and land use, and History involved a shift in emphasis from political to social and economic developments.(34)

The Rural Syllabus complemented all this, but directed it differently. All subjects were to have a definite rural bias within the classroom and beyond it, and the intensity of the experience was a telling feature. Total immersion was the key. Every local farm, field, fruit, house, hill, hedge, stream, skill, song, crop and craft was studied in depth through a host of walks, talks, practical activities and integrated projects. Without doubt, the syllabus had many exciting features, with tasks and approaches attractive to both pupils and teachers. Nevertheless, despite the impressive range of themes to explore and questions to answer, the syllabus ensured the distance the children

travelled literally and conceptually was limited. Epitomising this point was the fact that positive discrimination operated in the selection of textbooks and readers, those "bearing on country life and subjects" being paramount.(35) Another notable feature was the central place held by the story of British agriculture in History.(36)

Hertfordshire's greatest departure from Pamphlet 46 was in the emphasis on farming. Pamphlet 46 recommended wide-ranging parish surveys, but expected them to have a strong historical bias. Hertfordshire made detailed agricultural studies on site, reinforced by work back in school, the dominating feature. Farm studies were to be in depth, as indicated by the stipulation that each class was to make a minimum of two and a maximum of six visits a term.(37) The farmer, the headteacher, and sometimes an Oaklands lecturer, would guide the visits. So important were these visits that ten of the fifteen pages of the Syllabus were devoted to detailed questions children should ask about crops, animals, buildings, equipment, and the multitude of daily and seasonal tasks.(38) Other intensive studies were to be made of rural industries such as mills, malthouses, wheelwrights and blacksmiths.(39) By comparing the two documents the considerably greater bias of the county scheme, together with its repeated opportunities to corner and channel children's interest in local agriculture, are starkly revealed. Indeed, as early as January 1927, before the Syllabus was under way, the local press saw the vocational motive as obvious, but no less welcome for being so clear, and commended the LEA for boldly providing "specialised educational facilities" for rural children "fitting them to undertake, on leaving school, agricultural occupations."(40)

Conditions were clearly conducive to Hertfordshire's Rural Syllabus taking root and flourishing. Its advocates were in positions of power. Morris was chairman of the education committee, and Graveson vice-chairman. The farmer, Edmund Barnard, was chairman of the county council, Sir Charles Longmore, clerk to the council, was openly sympathetic to agricultural interests, and so was the press. (41) The Board had paved the way for the coordination of local efforts, and HMI was encouraging. The NFU was concerned to counter criticisms of farmers' lingering hostility to educational developments, and the HCTA approved the current emphasis on integration, investigation and improved relations with rural employers. (42) Gardening and Handicraft were long-established subjects, but both were under criticism for mechanistic teaching and widely acknowledged to be in need of revitalisation. (43) The Natural History of Hertfordshire had been published, and the school medical officers welcomed all healthy outdoor activities. Already some rural schools had taken heed of the advice to study local sites and crafts. (44)

1927 saw the Rural Syllabus launched in twelve schools, chosen because their existing rural bias impressed Bloom and Morris. It was preceded and accompanied by special courses for teachers at Oaklands, and the education committee also accepted with alacrity the well-timed offer by the Board of Education and Ministry of Agriculture to grant-aid rurally biased Rural Continuation classes to ensure the agricultural impetus was not lost after the age of 14. (45) Six more schools were added during the first year, and another fifteen during 1928. (46) As the first schools were selected to pioneer the scheme, and the second, third and subsequent groups had to apply to join them, a measure of prestige accompanied involvement in the Rural Syllabus. A Hertfordshire curriculum initiative was so rare that this fact alone indicates the importance of the programme to the LEA, but the £7 equipment grant and the temporary increased

staffing awarded to participating schools confirms irrefutably its high standing with education committee members.(47)

Undoubtedly all parties wanted the Rural Syllabus to work. The years 1927-30 saw a flurry of specialist developments by enthusiastic schools, but the paramountcy of regular farm visits remained unchallenged.(48) The education committee pursued public approval avidly, seeking to set the Rural Syllabus in tablets of stone. Early in 1928 it formed a sub-committee, with a £50 budget, to ensure the practical aspects of the Syllabus, and thereby its more pragmatic purpose, were well exhibited at the prestigious County Agricultural Show.(49) In the light of press eulogies, the budget was doubled for succeeding years.(50) Approbation reached its climax with the visit in July 1928 of the Duchess of Atholl, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, to a selection of schools using the Syllabus. Morris told the education committee, and the press told the rest of the county, that the Duchess not only believed the schools were recapturing interest in country life, but the example of the first pupils who had taken up the agricultural scholarships indicated "that this work is full of possibilities and hope for the future."(51) No-one in Hertfordshire had any reason to doubt that this meant the Board approved all aspects of the syllabus, including its vocational purpose.

In the summer of 1929 an emboldened county council revised the Syllabus, extending the farming topics and adding new sections on woods, villages and types of houses.(52) A few months later it found two ministries supporting its vocational objectives. In December, with specific reference to rural schools, the Board's Chief Inspector told subordinates it was essential

"if the raising of the school age is not to be damned in popular estimation, that the boys and

girls in this additional year should not continue to mark time ... Amongst other things we must contemplate the provision of instruction which is much more nearly "vocational" than has been customary in the past. We ought to explore the possibility of making some use of the staff and facilities for agricultural education in the area."(53)

Hertfordshire's Rural Syllabus and Agricultural Institute were calculated to fulfil these considerations perfectly. At the same time, the Ministry of Agriculture, with the Board's continuing support, encouraged LEAs to expand all aspects of agricultural education, trusting they needed no convincing of the benefits it offered "to the rising generation with whom rests the future of the industry."(54)

The fame of Hertfordshire's Rural Syllabus became national, then international. Indeed, by 1930 the chief education officer, Howe, could report to education committee members that copies of the Syllabus had been requested from Canada, the USA, India, Australia, and Jamaica, and that it "has been adopted in its entirety by three or four English counties."(55) Its reputation, however, rested on the exceptional bias achieved in a few schools, perhaps epitomised by Hertingfordbury. Here the headmaster turned the school premises into a miniature rural estate, basing much of the curriculum on its detailed running. From 1927 until 1930 his logbook is filled with reports of distinguished visitors - the Duchess of Atholl, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Sir Michael Sadler, the BBC to record programmes for its series 'Elementary Agriculture for Rural Schools', the Directors of Education for Cyprus and Jamaica, officials and councillors from other LEAs, college principals, and a steady stream of inspectors from the Board of Education and Ministry of Agriculture.(56) In due course the headmaster received a MBE, membership of the BBC's Natural History and Science Committee, and invitations to broadcast and lecture. (57) From 1932 the visitors became less frequent and less distinguished, comprising mainly classes of children, teachers and training college lecturers seeking instruction. (58) Nevertheless, although the wide-ranging interest

faded, HMIs continued to use the school's work in major exhibitions, and as late as 1939 the headmaster was prominent in organising the Rural Science Exhibition at the Royal Agricultural Society's Centenary Show.(59) At this show another much publicised Hertfordshire village school, Wilstone, exhibited the clothes the children had made, from the cloth they had wove, from the thread they had spun, on the wheels they had constructed, using the wool they had combed and the dyes they had mixed from the plants they had collected and grown.(60)

In the mid and later 1930s, as Wilstone and Hertingfordbury testify, although the Rural Syllabus attracted decreasing public attention this is clearly not evidence of its decline in use. The reverse seems true, that its educational features continued to stimulate teachers and children and its vocational aspect continued to stimulate the LEA to encourage adoption, monitor progress, issue grants, and provide courses. Certainly Bloom promoted the use of the Syllabus. He recognised the education committee's utilitarian motives, but considered the occasional accusations of conditioning an acceptable price for the "definite invitation to schools to experiment freely" within the relatively broad framework of the Syllabus.(61) In 1932, for example, another major conference at Oaklands revealed the way the Syllabus was satisfying all parties. Farmers were proving very cooperative with schools, the Ministry of Agriculture was keeping the county up-to-date on agricultural developments, well-designed educational projects abounded, and a wide range of rural crafts were flourishing in village schools.(62)

The vocational element, despite the criticisms, rose increasingly to the fore during the mid and late 1930s. During this period the Board of Education undoubtedly acquiesced in rural education having an overt rather than

merely covert vocational bias. It was inexpedient politically to be suspected of subordinating rising educational aspirations to agricultural requirements, and therefore initially the Board's signals were glimpsed between clouds of progressive dialogue. In 1934 the Board's new pamphlet Education in the Countryside made much of the change of title from Rural Education published in 1926, and distanced itself from the vocationally minded Ministry of Agriculture.(63) Nevertheless, for all the eloquent emphasis upon the needs of the rural pupil transcending the needs of the rural district, the pamphlet first asserted that

"neither cultural nor utilitarian needs can be met by an education which does not freely derive its content and its inspiration from the environment of the pupils",

and then argued that

"schools, and particularly those in the country districts, should be regarded ... as social institutions evolved by the community for the preservation of its distinctive life and for the satisfaction of its cultural and other needs."(64)

The best teachers, therefore, used the local environment as an educational stimulus, and if this included imparting "some knowledge of the principles underlying the future work of the majority of the children" so much the better.(65) Justification for this argument lay in a survey of southern counties which revealed that contrary to popular belief a majority of boys - 63% - left village schools to work on farms or in rural trades, and a majority of country girls - 70% - took up domestic work. For isolated villages the figures were much higher - 87% and 88% respectively. (66) Such conclusions clearly made it acceptable to acknowledge, and indeed quietly promote, the decidedly vocational features of rural education.

Hertfordshire noted the shift in government policy, and welcomed the increasing openness about it. Indeed, with Morris active at the very centre of NFU affairs as well as local educational ones, it is unlikely the education

committee was not well-informed on matters so close to members' hearts. In July 1935, for example, a complacent county council recorded its satisfaction at Herwald Ramsbotham's Commons statement that the objective of rural schools was

"to create a vital interest in country life, and not to make the education of the children just a stepping stone to life in towns and cities".(67)

In 1936 the education committee took immediate advantage of the Board's revised regulations allowing vocational evening classes for school leavers in rural districts. This training was specifically targeted at villages whose schools had adopted the Rural Syllabus, reflecting members' continuing trust in the efficacy of this all-pervasive approach.(68)

These were the first of a sequence of comforting indications that, despite the estrangement intimated by Education in the Countryside, the Board of Education remained in close embrace with the Ministry of Agriculture and was increasingly more likely to commend Hertfordshire's attitudes and policies than criticise them. The new vocational initiatives were the openly acknowledged corollary of the government's desire to assist agriculture, with particular pressure on a compliant Board coming from the Ministry of Agriculture to counter "wrong tendencies in general elementary education", chiefly the strongly suspected deliberate diversion of young people away from agriculture by teachers.(69) In November 1937 a Board memorandum eulogised and promoted rural senior schools far more for the potential extremity of their agricultural bias than for providing generally wider educational and social opportunities than small all-age village schools.(70) Greater depth not greater breadth seemed the objective - more farm visits, more agricultural history, more Rural Science.(71) The following year the Board provided more money for rural teachers' courses in rural subjects, and urged LEAs to promote the Young Farmers' Club Movement.(72)

Climactically, in the weeks before the outbreak of war the Board and Ministry Parliamentary Secretaries were seeking a joint policy openly encouraging "any necessary reorientation of rural education" to serve the needs of agriculture.(73) Captain Morris could not have put it more positively.

By then, August 1939, local press interest in the Rural Syllabus had long since lapsed. In Hertfordshire the combination of an intensive rural and vocational bias was neither novel or controversial, despite the sensitivity surrounding government pronouncements. Although a folder of children's work survives from one rural school, much of the evidence for the years after 1932 is limited to routine logbook entries.(74) Accumulatively, however, they reveal schools continued to combine the ubiquitous farm visits with other specialist interests centred upon the local environment. At least two headteachers tackled full-scale parish surveys lasting several years, perhaps the ultimate development of the Rural Syllabus.(75) The entries in logbooks, commentaries on surveys, conference reports and press articles all indicate the Syllabus was educationally stimulating, and the content bias generally considered both appropriate and welcome. There were exceptions however. The occasional criticisms of educational conditioning, and occasional objections to children witnessing cruelty to animals, highlight both the utilitarian objectives underlying the Syllabus and the obstacles impeding their achievement.(76) In addition, the inclination of some teachers to demur at obviously vocational activities weighed heavily with Bloom in 1939 as he arrived at a generally favourable judgement of the Syllabus in action. Certainly HMI, and the schools, defined success more in terms of teaching processes and procedures than vocational training - the new freedom to talk in class, work independently, plan in groups, integrate subjects, engage in genuine investigations, deal with things and people in context, and draft statements and results without excessive concern for

spelling and handwriting.(77) Nevertheless, although in the final analysis Bloom considered the educational means transcended the agricultural ends, the suspicion must be that the relative attraction of the novel teaching and learning environment was at least conducive to a resurgent interest in rural life and work. Rural county councillors never doubted the Syllabus' capacity to stem depopulation, and perhaps deemed the implementation and subsequent expansion of the vocational courses in agriculture for school leavers sufficient evidence of long-term success.(78)

The next section (iii) places the Rural Syllabus in the wider school curriculum context, showing how other traditional features were both modernised and intensified as an act of policy. The following section (iv) examines the relatively unsuccessful but logical application of the policy of rural bias to teacher recruitment. Accumulatively, these form part of the foundation to sections (v) and (vi) which argue that the longevity of Hertfordshire's all-age village schools was accompanied by remarkable all-round educational vigour, and that both the longevity and the vigour were the result of determined and coherent local policies. Indeed when Hertingfordbury, for example, became yet another decapitated school in the autumn of 1939 in accordance with general government policy, it is doubtful whether the village had moved forward at all educationally - except in the Board's statistics.(79)

(iii)

"ADDING REALITY"

SCHOOL GARDENING : THE FALL & RISE OF THE EXPERTS

During the 1920s school gardening rose in stature generally, and nowhere more so than in Hertfordshire. It moved away from mere allotment keeping to become a key subject combining a range of theoretical studies and practical activities. In doing so, it was responsive to the overlapping interests of several pressure groups. Their activities reveal that the increasing educational importance of gardening was accompanied by, and very much interwoven with, an evolving appreciation of its vocational significance. School gardening flourished in the way it did because of both the intensity of interest shown by its controlling forces and the tensions between them.

Fundamentally the process was sequential not spiral. After the Armistice, teachers and HMI began the transformation of gardening as an educational pursuit, a phenomenon education committee members, the agricultural lobby and the Ministry of Agriculture had no hesitation or difficulty in channelling to their own advantage. The educational trends in school gardening, and their vocational potential, were obviously prime motivators of the Rural Syllabus which eventually subsumed the subject in at least thirty-three selected schools. The Rural Syllabus was something of a privilege, initially at least, but gardening became virtually obligatory in all rural schools. Over the years, however, it broadened in scope, with evidence from the 1930s

indicating it became indistinguishable from many sections of the Rural Syllabus in content, and in intensity.

After 1918 schools abandoned the wartime mass production of vegetables, and reverted to pre-war syllabuses devoted to formal training in practical gardening techniques. Nevertheless, stimulated by constant HMI attention, school gardening quickly acquired new dimensions, wide appeal and a high profile - a process charted locally by the introduction and instant popularity of district and county competitions and cups.(80) By 1921, out of 258 Hertfordshire schools, 92 had recognised grant-aided gardens, and 50 others cultivated diverse plots on a less formal basis. 116 schools were without gardens, but of these 80 were urban, 10 were for infants and juniors only, and most of the remainder were very small rural schools which even HMI considered hardly worth the expense of land and equipment.(81)

School gardening owed its new and fashionable status to a combination of paradoxical trends. It appealed not only to those intimately concerned with teaching but also to those beyond the school who viewed elementary education as a means of social conditioning. It made a major contribution to new and dynamic methods of teaching, and to new visions of healthy childhood, but equally it harked back to older concerns for activities inculcating utilitarian skills and virtues such as discipline, perseverance, ordered routines and patient craftsmanship in the children of the working classes. The uneasy but obviously attractive blend of old attitudes and new aspirations characterised the revised county education handbook of 1923, which emphasised petty administrative restrictions, the moral qualities inculcated through gardening, and its practical relevance to adult life, alongside the significance of competition, the need for theoretical understanding, and the importance of individual experimentation.(82) The county gardening

supervisors - JW Bamber and FW Miles - personified the handbook. They had promulgated instrumental approaches and vocational attitudes as axiomatic since their employment long before the war. In the 1920s they supported new developments, but as HMI implied pessimistically in 1925, their old ideas were not really abandoned, or adequately modified in the light of modern thinking.(83)

The compound of old and new continued throughout the 1920s as the pupils' mastery of practical skills was increasingly mixed with theoretical lessons and experimental work.(84) As part of this process, the services of local gardeners as unqualified instructors were abandoned, and headteachers encouraged, and later expected, to take personal charge of this subject.(85) An indication of the LEA's commitment to such developments was its unusual preference for relatively expensive male headteachers in village schools, even where rolls did not exceed 50.(86) Most significant of all, under the direction of HMI, and with the positive support of the Handicraft Supervisor, the headteachers and gardening instructors exploited links with English, Art, and, notably, Handwork, Science and Mathematics.(87) It meant a growing range of subjects had gardening-related content and tasks allocated to them.(88) In addition, it was found that an adroit grading of intellectual and physical challenges led dull pupils, for whom routine agricultural occupations might seem particularly appropriate, to become as interested in gardening as brighter ones.(89) The regular reports from HMI and county instructors ensured such factors were brought to the attention of education committee members. There can be little doubt that members found this growing enthusiasm for the detailed study and propagation of flowers, fruits, vegetables and small livestock, coupled with a theoretical and practical understanding of soils, seasons, weather, pests and manures singularly gratifying, as it could only assist in preserving interest in the countryside and engendering sympathy and support for an intensive rural bias

as LEA policy. With much of the curriculum now centred upon the new concept of gardening in the vast majority of rural schools, and a substantial minority of urban ones, it is hardly surprising the county council confirmed its enthusiasm for the direction the subject was taking by granting funds for an extensive display by 21 local schools at the Bath & West Show in 1926. (90)

Out of these fermenting interests erupted not only the the Rural Syllabus but also the soaring influence of Oaklands Agricultural Institute. In 1930 HMI bestowed great praise on both the Syllabus and the Institute for the stimulating influence they had had on all schools, not just those formally adopting the all-embracing Syllabus.(91) A new "zest and keenness" for the study of the natural environment was seen everywhere.(92) A significant corollary was the final eclipse of Bamber and Miles, criticised by HMI since 1925 for their conspicuous failure to modernise their outlook, systematize county developments and organise teachers' courses.(93) Since 1927, and the launch of the Rural Syllabus, the LEA had sought expert educational advice, and a wide range of materials for schools, almost exclusively from Oaklands.(94) In 1930, soon after another report by HMI condemning the professional limitations of Miles and Bamber, the former resigned and the latter was made subordinate to Oakland's principal.(95)

Throughout the 1930s Oaklands diligently furthered education committee policy, and by advancing on a wide front broadened the concept of school gardening throughout the county. The principal's personal standing within both the educational and agricultural worlds was high. His expertise, resources and status were instrumental in promoting a strong rural influence in the curriculum of all schools through a combination of intensive courses for

teachers, the increased involvement of girls, the thorough correlation of gardening with other subjects, the final eradication of all unqualified help, the regular inspection of gardens and syllabuses, plenty of practical tips, and the dissemination of ideas, information and pamphlets from the Ministry of Agriculture.(96)

During these years the economic depression must have ensured the agricultural institute kept its paymasters constantly in mind. In 1932 Oaklands was under close scrutiny by the county council's Special Expenditure Committee, and although a decade of shrewdly targeted work had elapsed since its very birth was threatened, it must have remained prudent for the institute to seize every opportunity to become an indispensable ally of the LEA. In 1933, for example, the principal's annual report reassuringly claimed that most school gardens were "very satisfactory" and some "of quite exceptional merit", and teachers were remaining keen and becoming increasingly knowledgeable.(97) "From talking to the boys", he added, "it is obvious that they have a greater interest and understanding of country life."(98) Perhaps, too, neither the timing nor the message of Oakland's Suggestions for School Gardening, published in the same year, were accidental. It combined, adroitly, economic and educational justifications for this increasingly intrusive aspect of school life. School gardening trained children to be observant, it broadened their outlook on the natural world, it added "reality" to the whole curriculum, and it appealed to children of all abilities - but its *raison d'être* was nevertheless

"the stimulation of greater interest in rural surroundings and rural science, which incidentally may help to create a better understanding between the urban and rural populations."(99)

By 1937, however, there was a matter-of-fact, even brusque, air about the principal's reports, and just a hint of complacency - sure signs of confidence that both the

agricultural institute and the rural bias in education were thoroughly well-established in the county, and everyone who mattered - HMI, county councillors, education committee members, school managers, the HCTA and the NFU - recognised and appreciated their value.(100)

(iv)

"SPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR WORK IN RURAL SCHOOLS"

THE RURAL PUPIL-TEACHER CONTROVERSY

Throughout the 1920s Hertfordshire education committee did not waver in viewing the rural pupil-teacher system as a cheap and efficient way of providing itself with cheap and effective rural teachers. This conviction was a corollary of the committee's policy of preserving rural schools in order to accentuate a rural bias in them to the point of saturation. In practice, it amounted to isolating rural pupil-teachers from all urban influences during childhood and adolescence, and subjecting them to a severely limited programme of training after their rurally biased education. The Board treated Hertfordshire with barely concealed disdain over its devotion to the system. Increasingly, it denigrated the efficiency of the pupil-teachers' preliminary training, criticised the quality of their personal education, and doubted the premiss upon which the local scheme rested - that most Hertfordshire rural pupil-teachers would become Hertfordshire rural teachers. Nevertheless, for more than a decade the Board combined these frequent expressions of hostility with covert signals that the LEA could continue to pursue its reactionary and parsimonious practices with some degree of confidence.

Given an inch the LEA took a yard, exploiting every hesitation and weakness to the full. Fundamentally the Board hesitated to condemn the scheme utterly as it had no alternative solution to rural recruitment short of the major expansion of secondary and selective central schools.

This the education committee would not do, on both economic and ideological grounds, nor could it be compelled to do. The Board, therefore, would not risk the imposition of restrictions on the pupil-teacher system severe enough to debar rural children completely from entry to the teaching profession. However, it was neither completely powerless nor unconcerned, and distinguished between encouraging rural pupils to become teachers and circumscribing their early training and personal education. Its tactic was to deem Hertfordshire's initial encouragement admirable, but gradually seek a more broad and liberal education for the pupil-teachers. Nevertheless, with the Board's lingering acceptance of rural Supplementary teachers, and also Uncertificated headteachers in small schools, Hertfordshire education committee was justified in adjudging official standards unlikely to rise either hastily or excessively.

It is, of course, improbable the education committee shared the Board's preference for training colleges as the ultimate destination for rural pupil-teachers. It was the Board, not the LEA, which showed dismay at the failure of most local pupil-teachers to achieve this objective. Most who stayed the rural pupil-teacher course in Hertfordshire remained Uncertificated in status, an overall situation not out of line with county policy to provide itself with a number of rural teachers with the appropriate background and education, who had been relatively cheap to produce and were to be relatively cheap to employ.

Soon after the war the chronic shortage of teachers at a time of great educational uncertainty, coupled with habitual concern for sources of cheap staff, motivated the education committee to act swiftly and presciently to consolidate its rural pupil-teacher system. By April 1920, although the county's Education Act Scheme was far from complete, the

extent of the impending shortfall in teaching staff had become alarmingly clear. The Board's Circular 1124 accentuated Hertfordshire's inadequate preparations - and its paltry contribution to the national pool - by stating that the number of intending teachers secured by each LEA annually should be 10% of the number of its permanent posts. For Hertfordshire this represented 140; over the last three years the number of county bursars, probationers and pupil-teachers had averaged 41.(101) The remedial action taken by the education committee consisted of rapidly attaching pupil-teacher centres to Watford and St.Albans central schools, appointing a second peripatetic rural pupil-teacher supervisor, planning a part-time centre for the rural north, and revising the three year programmes of study.(102) While the development of centres satisfied the Board's general criteria for expanding the pupil-teacher system, the specifically rural features unashamedly exploited the new regulations which still permitted the superannuated system, whereby pupil-teachers were educated by the headteachers and visiting instructors, to survive in districts where numbers were insufficient to form central classes.(103) The Board's intended last ditch defence became the LEA's first line of advance.

Local recruitment was not a problem, but costs were. By September 1921 there were 105 rural pupil-teachers, a net rise of 15 since April 1920.(104) Ideologically the LEA was unconcerned that only 5 rural pupil-teachers around St.Albans were able to attend the city's centre, but the educational and economic attractiveness of providing a series of new part-time rural centres was not lost on an education committee faced with the increasing costs and vagaries of headteachers' tuition.(105) Indeed, the lack of sufficient instruction, stimulation and competition to enable candidates to pass the annual examinations meant that rural isolation could be taken too far. The creation of five rural centres was considered an effective solution,

with pupil-teachers teaching two days, attending a centre two days and studying privately on the fifth day each week.(106)

Throughout the first half of the 1920s, when the economic recession and the clarification of the post-war education system went hand in hand, the Board acknowledged the need to recruit teachers widely and with a liberally interpreted sensitivity to local needs and problems. The Board also knew that within this framework the practices of parsimonious counties such as Hertfordshire could be controlled to some extent through alterations in the grant formula. Thus, in 1923 the LEA finally ceased to expect headteachers to train pupil-teachers when the Board terminated its share of grants for this purpose.(107) The balance was now decidedly in favour of further education in school and centre, and against early professional training. In 1924, as a result of a full inspection, the LEA appointed a third supervisor and allowed pupil-teachers to attend the centres for a third day each week.(108) Yet Hertfordshire's scheme was in no danger from HMI and the Board. HMI had approved local practice generally, finding the pupil-teachers "good material physically and mentally", and commending the thoroughness with which unsuitable candidates were weeded out.(109)

The threat came from the rural children themselves as recruitment figures plummeted. By late 1925 there were just 48 rural pupil-teachers.(110) Nevertheless, the LEA doggedly considered the ends justified revamping the means. The chief education officer, Hallidie, recommended retrenchment and a temporary reduction in centres and staff, but not abandonment of the principle that rural children,

"though they develop later than town children, form quite as satisfactory material as the latter and are specially suitable for work in rural schools."(111)

Arguing that the routes to teaching via the secondary school, and the central school and pupil-teacher centre, were "generally closed to rural children", he was reflecting the education committee's determination to encourage rural recruits, see them through a rural apprenticeship, and return them to rural schools, whatever the cost in bureaucratic time and trouble.(112)

Numbers fell to 26 in the summer of 1926, but ironically, at the education committee's darkest hour, wider Board concerns hinted at a new dawn.(113) Unlike the LEA, Lord Eustace Percy considered the rural pupil-teacher "not adequate to the purpose", and initiated a long-term study of "the type of training best suited to maintain a supply of teachers for our rural schools."(114) He had in mind college and other courses which combined "general education" with

"special facilities for acquiring knowledge in horticulture and agriculture and for stimulating interest in the rural environment."(115)

Until the issue was resolved, however, he cautioned against discarding "any source of supply of good teachers."(116) This startling official confirmation of such a bias in rural teacher training came at the time when the county agricultural lobby was in the ascendant, Morris was chairman of the education committee, the Rural Syllabus was about to be launched, and the preservation of village schools was a key county issue. Possibly it was over-confidence, maybe a sense of invincibility, which led the education committee to believe Percy had actually provided Hertfordshire with the golden opportunity to revitalise and dramatically reorientate its rural pupil-teacher system rather than signal its belated, if temporarily deferred, demise.

Although Hertfordshire's new scheme, submitted to the Board in the summer of 1927, represented the triumph of hope over reason, post-war experiences of the Board's vacillation over the rural pupil-teacher question to some extent justified

the education committee's bizarre proposals. The LEA's preamble used paraphrases of Percy's arguments supporting major new college courses to defend a system reintroducing single-school apprenticeships. The principle, it claimed, was to secure more teachers

"fitted for work in rural schools who, owing to their special training and qualifications, are likely to stimulate the intelligence and interest of the country children."(117)

The practice, despite numerous controls and complex procedures, amounted to rural pupil-teachers, plus any urban volunteers, becoming apprenticed, in groups, to the headteachers of eleven approved rural schools - all of whom were involved in the Rural Syllabus.(118) During their apprenticeship the intending teachers would receive full board and a modest salary. They would attend Oaklands courses, and the LEA anticipated the agricultural institute becoming, in part and in due course, a rurally biased residential teacher training college.(119) As a corollary of the education committee's rural education policy the proposals were logical and had much to commend them. Indeed, by developing a species of specially cultivated home-grown teachers, they completed the county's rural portfolio.

As the proposals gave financial incentives to recruitment, and based training upon the latest educational initiatives in schools and a specialised institute of higher education, education committee members never doubted they acted in accord with the Board's long-term aspirations as well as short-term expediency. Over the next two years - mid 1927 until mid 1929 - Hertfordshire's Rural Syllabus attained national fame, the rural bias generally was intensified, and rural pupil-teachers continued to be recruited under the existing regulations.(120) Although the Board deemed the subject sub-judice until the national inquiry was complete, as far as the LEA was concerned firm foundations for the new

teacher training programme were being secured with government approval.(121)

The prolonged misunderstanding stemmed from the LEA finally misreading signals, miscalculating outcomes and assuming an excessive degree of local autonomy at a time when the Board was finally contemplating significant changes in a locally sensitive area of elementary education. In this respect it represents a shift in the roles of the Board and LEA as the determinants of local policy, and highlights paradoxically both the customarily fluid nature and the ultimate parameters of the boundary between them. Clearly the LEA was overly parochial and idiosyncratic just when the Board was combining its acceptance of a more intense rural bias with a broader view of rural teacher training, but this irony emphasises that, fundamentally, the conflict was concerned with the best means of fulfilling converging, not diverging, local and national rural policies.

Percy's national inquiry was completed early in 1929, and the LEA signalled its undiminished confidence in its 1927 scheme by instantly resubmitting it unaltered.(122) In such ominous circumstances it seems no coincidence that the Board chose this time to inspect current Hertfordshire practice. The subsequent report took the unusual form of a polemic remorselessly destroying all local illusions. First it exposed the fallacy that Hertfordshire's rurally educated and trained children became local rural teachers either in the quantity desired by the LEA or in the quality expected by the Board. Between 1920 and 1928 149 Hertfordshire rural pupil-teachers had completed their apprenticeship. Of these, 29 withdrew prior to the qualifying examination, and another 42 failed it, although 3 of them subsequently became Supplementaries. 61 became Uncertificated teachers, and just 17 entered training colleges. Thus just 81 - 54% - actually became teachers of

some description. Of these 81, 49 continued or returned to work in Hertfordshire, representing 33% of the initial intake. Of these 49, only 20 taught in rural schools - 13.4% of the original total. As 19 of these 20 were Uncertificated, they were almost wholly employed with teaching children under 11 for whom any bias was deemed inappropriate.(123) The enfilade then swept from past to present errors of judgement. Hertfordshire's contention that rural pupil-teachers,

"by reason of their particular knowledge of rural life, will be able to make school life more interesting and instructive to village children than the town bred teacher and will be able to take a prominent and valuable part in rural activities will only hold good if they get a liberal type of education; and this is not likely to be the case if they are taught singly or in small groups by the Head Teacher of the Elementary School and at the end of their apprenticeship merely become Uncertificated Teachers."(124)

The LEA's strong point in its "1927 scheme" - the reliance on the approved schools - was deemed the major conceptual weakness by the Board which refused to believe they were

"capable of undertaking successfully with their present staff, organization and equipment, the whole of the instruction of the rural pupil-teachers up to the examination stage."(125)

The LEA was enjoined to turn its attention to revising and extending its Secondary Free Places, and its travelling and maintenance grants, with rural needs in mind.(126)

Even now the coup de grace was not delivered to rural pupil-teachers. The "1927 scheme" was scotched, and henceforth no child would be confirmed by the Board as a pupil-teacher unless a secondary school was inaccessible from home.(127) Characteristically the LEA very nearly based its future policy on the loophole. Certainly Howe rejected the Board's idea of maintaining elementary pupil-teachers at secondary schools from the age of 14 or 15. Firstly, they had not previously followed the same curriculum, especially in Languages, Science and Mathematics, but secondly, and

more significantly, he considered rural pupils boarded out in towns would soon view rural life with disfavour.(128) Thus, he argued, cost-effectiveness dictated that the LEA only accepted rural teaching candidates from places remote enough to qualify them as pupil-teachers attached to approved rural schools.(129)

Ironically the LEA provided the means of its own final rejection of such limited perceptions of rural teaching. A special sub-committee was established to assess Howe's recommendations and review the situation, and this in itself suggests a crisis in local confidence. The membership included a range of headteachers as well as senior education committee members, and the witnesses included many concerned with teacher training at various levels - further factors hinting at a greater openness of mind within the LEA. The weight of educational evidence and opinion clearly told, and the iconoclastic report made rural isolationism in the teacher training context appear strikingly illogical and anachronistic. In a telling passage, this all-Hertfordshire committee condemned any policy and action perpetuating the view that someone was "only a country teacher".(130) This would do nothing for professional morale, recruitment, or rural regeneration - and represented an issue felt particularly keenly by teachers' associations.(131) The sub-committee advocated transferring to secondary or central schools all rural pupils aged 13 or 14 who had displayed a genuine interest in teaching and passed a rigorous entrance examination.(132) The places would be free, and accompanied by grants for board, travelling and maintenance. Once, and if, the qualifying examination was passed, the intending rural teacher became a monitor-in-training in an approved rural elementary school for a year prior to entry to training college.(133)

The recommendations were adopted in 1930, and set the pattern for the decade. The single "holding" year in elementary school prior to college entry was the vestige of the rural-pupil teacher system. By 1932 this had shrunk further, as HMI ensured the monitors offset even this degree of elementary isolation with additional part-time instruction in their secondary schools.(134)

The LEA had flown in the face of prevailing trends with conspicuous success in the early 1920s. Its preoccupation with the rural pupil-teacher system, largely as originally established, was consistent with its overall perception of rural needs. This amounted to providing communities with teachers whose main qualities were an understanding of village life, a knowledge of the countryside, an appreciation of the skills and worth of rural occupations, and a commitment to rural regeneration. It was immaterial to the education committee that this implied a limited view of teachers and education, and was calculated to deprive rural children of choice over their future lives and careers. The Board certainly denigrated the principle of educational isolationism and the archaic practices serving it, but its moral stance was compromised by government sympathy with all efforts to stem rural decay and its remedial actions were limited by the lack of cost-effective alternative suggestions. Ironically, after a decade's stubbornness, the LEA found the "fifth column" within its borders overwhelming. The signs, of course, existed earlier but had been ignored. The rural pupil-teacher system became increasingly unattractive, the idea of a "second rate" group of teachers increasingly unacceptable, and equal access to secondary schooling became increasingly important, and it was these forces which, in combination, undermined education committee conservatism.

(v)

"A MODEL FOR THE COUNTRY"

THE PRESERVATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS

In May 1920 Hertfordshire's Finance & General Purposes Sub-Committee considered the appeal by the managers of two small schools against their proposed closure due to declining numbers. The Clothall closure was deemed disastrous for employers as the few remaining young families would leave the village, not to be replaced. A school was considered vital for survival. The corrugated iron classroom at Cuffley-in-Northaw was defended on the grounds that this southern village was likely to grow in the near future - provided it had its own school. Although these schools had only 23 and 13 on roll respectively, both defences were judged sound and the schools reprieved.(135) Such appeals and outcomes were to prove typical of the inter-war years, throughout which the county council consistently avoided the closure of rural schools whenever possible, sensitive to the arguments regarding depopulation, and resisting the temptation to reduce public expenditure if it was at the expense of village communities. The influential agricultural lobby was ensuring rural employers were protected by this policy which, of course, complemented the vigorous promotion of the Rural Syllabus, the expansion of Oaklands, and the determined defence of the rural pupil-teacher system.

The threat posed by the Geddes Report tested the resolution of the education committee regarding small schools, causing the educational, social and economic arguments to be more

finely balanced and rigorously examined. Hallidie recommended Hertfordshire followed the example of other authorities and considered closing schools where the average attendance did not exceed 40. Forty-one village schools fell into this category, and in only six cases were there not adequate spare places available at other schools less than three miles away.(136) With good reason, Hallidie claimed

"No one can study this list without coming to the conclusion that great economies are possible."(137)

The immediate closure of thirty-five schools within the statutory walking distance of neighbouring villages, less the cost of additional teachers at certain host schools, would effect an annual saving of £8,000 - 60% of the estimated total economies Hallidie thought possible in the elementary sector.(138) To clinch his case, Hallidie reiterated the contemporary dogma that on balance the concentration of pupils in fewer and larger schools was desirable educationally as it would mean

"better teaching for the children (owing to the better classification) and a greater stimulus in school work through mixing with children outside their present narrow circle."(139)

Hertfordshire county council had a well-deserved reputation for educational parsimony, but members of the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee, responsible for recommending economies to the education committee, were singularly unimpressed with Hallidie's calculations despite the panic-stricken nature of the times.(140) Every effort was made to whittle down the number of schools under threat. After prolonged consultations with all the managers by an investigating sub-committee, just twelve schools were put forward for closure, and the education committee further reduced the list to nine.(141) The subsequent county council debate witnessed a well-orchestrated tour-de-force by Barnard, Glossop and Graveson which effectively sealed county policy until 1939. First, Barnard was at pains to clarify publicly that the threat to village schools emanated

not from councillors but from government stringency.(142) Glossop and Graveson, although members of the investigating sub-committee, then focussed the discussion on the remote village of Wallington, convincing councillors that the financial saving, and possibility of a better education elsewhere, were probably being brought at the price of the isolated village's existence.(143) The suspicion arises that Wallington was left on the list with a policy-setting meeting in mind. It was just the type of struggling village - already without a parson and squire - which members were most likely to protect, and its particularly dire predicament clearly helped Barnard relate this example to the general principle with the trenchant comment that "if the parents were going to be harrassed by having their children carted about, it was obviously going to be a bad thing for the agricultural interest."(144)

By a vote of 33 to 10 Wallington was reprieved, and a general consensus reached that village schools should be treated sensitively and sympathetically as major contributors to rural social and economic stability.(145) The eventual size of the majority belied the vociferousness of the opposition to purely agricultural interests, which in turn confirms the determination, adroitness and influence of those seeking to protect them through the manipulation of educational policy. The anti-agricultural vote represented an odd alliance of extremes - those convinced larger schools promised a better education for country children, and those solely concerned with reducing public expenditure by all possible means.(146) The majority group, too, were diverse in background and motivation. Within the rural interest, but outside the narrower farming lobby, Canon Glossop was understandably sympathetic with, although financially realistic about, the preservation of the Anglican tradition in village schools, and the draper William Graveson was dedicated to promoting the aesthetic side of rural life.

Over the next few years the rural bias was consolidated in both practice and principle. Between 1925 and 1930 both Barnard and Morris, chairmen respectively of the county council and education committee, made no secret of their determination to defend the curriculum and preserve the institutions. In 1926, for example, Barnard celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of a village school founded by his father, a fortuitous opportunity to emphasise before a county-wide audience that

"these small schools meant everything to the life of a village."(147)

On the same platform Morris affirmed that

"as chairman of the Education Committee he felt very strongly on the subject of these small schools, which ought to be the centre of the social activities of the village..."

and when, significantly, unanimously re-elected chairman in 1927, his address to a compliant education committee emphasised

"it is only fair that the rural communities should have a larger share of education than before."(148)

This statement of intent referred particularly to the costs incurred in the Rural Syllabus, but conceptually it incorporated the earlier acts of reopening two of the eight schools closed after the celebrated 1922 debate. Both parishes had argued that the numbers of pre-school children forecast for the villages were rising sufficiently to make reopening worthwhile in terms of attempting to stabilise community life if not securing absolute financial economy. (149) The fact one reopened despite the unequivocal statement from county officials that "from a financial and educational standpoint, the closing of Great Munden School has been a success", indicates the strength of education committee feeling.(150)

The dichotomy between the partisanship of the education committee and the recommendations of its officials was a measure of how far rural problems transcended financial

considerations at this time. Certainly the education committee indulged in a longer term view of local requirements and likely developments in assessing the viability of small rural schools than either its officers or the Board, a device which frequently enabled more optimistic, if vague, prognostications to prevail over the terminal conclusions deducted from retrospective statistics. Thus the identification of an increased number of actual and projected pre-school children in the catchment area by an investigating sub-committee secured the survival of schools in Bedmond in 1923, and Waterford in 1924, against Hallidie's statistics and recommendations.(151) Indeed, other than the six permanent closures in 1922, only one Hertfordshire rural school was closed in the 1920s.(152)

In the late 1920s, and throughout the 1930s, the future of many rural schools was further complicated by the Board's desire, as a result of the 1926 Hadow Report, to reorganise groups of small schools so that more children of the same age or educational Standard could be taught together, with a definite break of class, and preferably school, at eleven. In direct contrast, the county education committee's determination to preserve each rural community intact was extended to incorporate the battles to keep the schools all-age. Sometimes managers and parents were the allies of the education committee, but their reliability in this context was so dependent upon a range of factors varying in degree in each locality that they could easily evolve into opponents. Voluntary school managers were often reluctant to lose the religious influence over the village children at eleven, but their resources in an increasingly demanding educational environment varied widely, sometimes to the point of belated and humiliating confessions of insolvency. Parental opinion oscillated even more wildly, with families forever balancing personal convenience against official claims of "improved classification" and other alleged educational advantages of decapitation and reorganisation.

Among the proposals for group reorganisation submitted by HMI Bloom, the consistent feature is the education committee's conspicuous success in avoiding decisions which members would find unpalatable. To a large extent local circumstances were conducive to the LEA gaining the maximum room for manoeuvre. Most important of all, its attitude to the status of rural schools was part of a coherent rural education policy which had considerable public support. In addition, as county interests were by and large best served by minimal changes in the status of rural schools, the LEA was usually unconcerned by inactivity in those able to threaten unwelcome alterations but ever ready to enter the mire of complex negotiations as a second line of defence. It was no accident Howe had been elevated to chief education officer for his proven ability to work within, rather than change or dominate, the pattern of educational decision making.

Nevertheless there is considerable evidence that Bloom was realistic enough to "hold the candle to the devil", and shrewd enough to play the education committee at its own game in his efforts to effect educational change. Throughout the years 1926-1939 a prolonged series of tactically tortuous negotiations were conducted resulting in a number of compromises in each of which Board policy, education committee objectives and village aspirations were fulfilled to varying degrees. Overall, the education committee triumphed as relatively few groups of villages were reorganised, and few villages lost their schools in the settlements which were achieved. The crucial point, however, was that increasing portions of rural districts were becoming urbanised in this period, making it in turn increasingly difficult for the LEA to avoid acquiescing in the establishment of senior schools serving a cluster of surrounding decapitated village schools, a proportion of which were too small to long survive the reduction in roll. In addition, as the communities hosting the centrally sited

senior schools were those easily accessible, relatively prosperous, and growing in size, the influence of any rural and vocational bias upon older country children was placed in jeopardy. Nevertheless the LEA was only too aware that government policy, educational opinion and local immigration were all forces to be accommodated when they could not be ignored, and thus the degree of officially recognised rural bias to be imposed upon the central senior schools in country towns became the all-important issue.

The evolution of the LEA's policy to preserve village schools as the means of social conditioning on behalf of sectional interests can be traced by several staged examples from its campaign to contain government policy on the one hand and offset demographic changes on the other.

Reorganisation could certainly be rapid if all parties stood to gain. In 1929-30, for example, the LEA was unusually active in expediting changes in the neighbouring villages of Ayot St. Lawrence, Ayot St. Peter and Welwyn. For several years the villages had feared that not all three voluntary schools would survive as rolls steadily declined, and the Schools' Reorganisation Committee (SRC), acting on behalf of its parent body, the county education committee, negotiated a solution whereby St. Lawrence's school closed, St. Peter's became a JMI school for both Ayots, and all pupils over eleven joined those at Welwyn, whose school remained all-age but now became sufficiently large to operate Hadow's "definite break".(153) The managers were in agreement as all the children remained in Anglican schools, the most dilapidated building was closed and sold, and all efforts could be directed at improving the Welwyn premises and accentuating its rural bias. From the education committee's point of view public expenditure was reduced, family inconvenience was minimal, the Hadow benefits were cheaply acquired, and the county's rural policy was maintained.(154)

It is significant in this manipulatory context that Welwyn gained such a reputation for its Rural Syllabus work that the SRC acceded without demur to Bloom's subsequent recommendation that two other nearby voluntary schools be asked to consider decapitation.(155) Woolmer Green, the larger school, agreed; Digswell, the smaller school refused, fearful for its consequent survival. It is an indication that the SRC was not overly concerned with disturbing a satisfactory status quo in such villages that henceforth Digswell remained both unpressurised and all-age.(156) In this mid-Herts district it was largely a case of the LEA having its country cake and eating it.

Intransigent managers and antipathetic communities could easily frustrate group reorganisation schemes, and clearly such local idiosyncracies could work towards fulfilling education committee policy, or placing it in jeopardy. Accumulating pressures could also oblige the LEA to take on the unwelcome role of arbiter of local disputes, with not only its own interests at stake and but also the Board having its own view about the rectitude of any locally negotiated solution. A striking example occurred in 1929 when the Board finally persuaded a procrastinating LEA to coax agreement between the neighbouring but warring villages of Offley and Cockernhoe, each possessing voluntary schools blacklisted since 1925. The threatened withdrawal of grant encouraged rapid but markedly reluctant agreement between all parties, whereby Offley was left all-age and refurbished, and Cockernhoe decapitated, with the latter's irate families only partially mollified by the LEA's provision of transport and facilities for hot dinners.(157) All these factors - decrepit schools, declining rolls, jealous managers and rival communities - were replicated in Rushdon, Sandon and Wallington. In this cluster of villages, however, existed forces conspiring to frustrate education committee policy. In 1929 the Board's ultimatum forced local negotiations. The managing bodies confessed

their impecunity, little local initiative was forthcoming, joint agreement proved impossible, and the LEA was obliged to plan a new school serving all three villages, and agree to provide transport.(158)

In 1930 Bloom proposed the idea of reorganising a large number of village schools around a new purpose-built non-selective senior school operating with a recognised rural bias, and recommended the small market town of Buntingford and its agricultural hinterland as the ideal location.

In this scheme rural reorganisation took on new geographical, educational and administrative dimensions as it involved the decapitation of ten schools, a major building programme and substantial transport costs. Nevertheless Bloom's arguments were well-chosen for his intended readership, and as such indicate the issues dominating contemporary local thought. He emphasised, for example, the village school premises were "generally poor", their practical work limited, and their older pupils in need of greater stimulation and better discipline.(159) He tempted education committee members with idea that a model senior school

"in the heart of agricultural Hertfordshire would afford a fine opportunity for carrying out the County Council's aims in regard to rural education as expressed in the Herts Rural Syllabus."(160)

In addition to hints of heightened vocationalism, he did not eschew making the considerable expense worthwhile in terms of further prestige for the LEA, as

"under favourable conditions of staffing and equipment a really high level of attainment might be attained and a senior school with an agricultural bias might be created which would be a model for the country."(161)

The scheme contained something for very nearly everyone. To a large extent it represented an effective working compromise, a striking example of the room for manoeuvre a LEA could create for itself within the broad bounds of

government policy. The Board had succeeded in prompting a recalcitrant LEA to initiate major Hadow-style reorganisation in a rural district. The education committee had found the scheme hard to resist for it promised an intensive rural bias throughout a prime agricultural area suffering particularly severe depopulation. The farming community could appreciate the rural bias was not only being formalised, but extended through new school courses which handed interested pupils straight on to Oaklands at sixteen.(162) Parents could see that new senior schools, normally associated with urban districts, were now reaching rural centres. Only the village school managers had mixed feelings. No longer would they face expenditure on facilities for their senior pupils, but the reduced rolls would leave four schools with 25 pupils or less.(163)

At this critical time in harmonising Hadow and Hertfordshire requirements, the economic depression of the early 1930s dramatically altered the relationship between the Board of Education, county council and school managers regarding rural schools. From local perspectives on rural schools, these years were far from an unmitigated disaster. The immediate effect was the rejection of several reorganisation proposals on grounds of cost by managers or LEA, or both, and relief seems as evident as regret. The slump certainly provided the perfect excuse, for example, for all parties to drop the desultory negotiations about restructuring five independently-minded voluntary schools in and around Hunsdon.(164) The new all-age school serving Rushden, Wallington and Sandon was postponed indefinitely by the LEA, a situation eventually leading the first two villages to resolve their differences and reburish one shared voluntary school.(165) Centralisation was minimised, the new county school limited to Sandon, and all communities satisfied - and, in these agricultural, educational and financial circumstances, so was the education committee.(166)

During the depression, the role of the LEA clearly changed in response to political and economic pressures, but equally clearly its rural policy remained firm and, because it could be fulfilled as much by masterly inactivity as positive negotiation, largely - if not completely - unaffected by the new fluctuations in external circumstances. Undoubtedly village school managers were justified in viewing reorganisation as a two-edged sword, and certainly the Buntingford negotiations foundered immediately on the question of decapitation and survival. Declining rolls and financial stringency did combine to close schools, but more significant than the number of casualties was the thoroughness of the LEA's investigation into each threatened school as it sought to save as many as possible. In January 1932 the education committee debated the fate of eighteen schools with 25 or less pupils. The evidence provided by each case indicates the committee was in no hurry to pursue closures, and although members shared the general enthusiasm for restricting expenditure it was not to be at the expense of rural communities. Thus, for example, the committee refused to "destroy the centre of village life" by closing Great Wymondley and Hinxworth schools, or to overburden other schools by closing Arkley or Shephall, and local inconvenience and the cost of "free" transport combined to save six others.(167) In the event just two very small schools closed and another two amalgamated.(168)

Such pressure for economies had a tendency to clarify priorities, a phenomenon reaching striking proportions in Hertfordshire. The LEA's rural policy combined financial liberality and educational conservatism at a time when the Board justified centralisation as both economically and educationally advantageous. Nevertheless, after a second round of detailed inquiries, in April 1932 Hertfordshire education committee reprieved another four schools newly identified for possible closure, with a ringing public affirmation of the principle that modest savings did not

compensate for the damage to village life.(169) That this principle stemmed from largely utilitarian concerns was revealed by the corollary reiterating that committee members

"do not consider that the education provided in a town school is necessarily the best education for a country child having regard to his probable future occupation and interests."(170)

The LEA was true to its word. Only if the local disruption was slight, and the financial saving considerable, was a village school decapitated, let alone closed. For example, Clothall's closure was finally deemed unavoidable in November 1932 for an accumulation of reasons. Numbers had continued to slump, the farming centre of Baldock was nearby, its schools had spare places, £195 would be saved, the head was retiring, and the managers had accepted the end was nigh.(171) Similar circumstances, with the additional incentive of appalling inspection reports, explain Great Wymondley's closure in 1934, but only after prolonged agonising, including a year's reprieve.(172) Nevertheless, a determined LEA reprieved the small all-age schools in Gilston in 1933 and in Therfield in 1935, and Willian was preserved, in part at least, by decapitation.(173)

Over the decade since the 1922 debate which introduced this section, county council opinion had, if anything, hardened in favour of its rural education policy. Clear evidence of this came in May 1932 when Graveson formally presented the modest cuts recommended by the school closure inquiries to the full council. The quiet approbation was particularly significant as this was the meeting Morris and Salisbury used to attack most aspects of public expenditure and establish the Special Expenditure Committee to root out extravagancies.(174) At the same time Graveson and Howe established a firm foundation for future developments, once the economy improved, through a comparative study of Hertfordshire's needs with rural reorganisational schemes in Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire. The celebrated Cambridgeshire village college concept was emphatically

rejected as possibly appropriate for large semi-industrial villages such as Sawston, but likely to inculcate a preference for urban rather than rural pursuits in pupils. (175) Only the small central school at Lutterworth in Leicestershire, serving several surrounding villages seemed applicable to Hertfordshire, primarily because it was non-selective and maintained a strong rural bias in its surroundings, atmosphere and curriculum. (176) It confirmed the appropriateness of eventually resurrecting the Buntingford project. In effect, during the tense years of 1931-33 Hertfordshire successfully retrenched, adapting its rural policy and procedures to withstand the depression and using the hiatus to formulate a clear and authoritative picture of its future.

In one important respect the Buntingford project benefited from the delay, revealing a distinctive shift in rural opinion during the 1930s. In 1930 the village communities had rejected decapitation. In 1936 the education committee noted the change in perspective as the villages sought "the advantage of a better type of education such as residents in large and more urban areas are receiving." (177) Graveson, too, acknowledged there might be distinctive vocational advantages - Handicraft would benefit from the concentration of extensive equipment, group activities would be more accurately targeted through the streaming, and a whole range of rurally-orientated pursuits would be available to pupils. (178) The imminent rise in the leaving age subjected managers to further pressure. Irrefutable educational arguments and unobtainable financial targets now led all 10 village schools to approve the resurrected scheme. (179) As Bloom had prophesied, the education committee took obvious pride in providing an officially recognised, fully-equipped, rurally biased senior school. (180) It opened in September 1939, and 14 surrounding schools finally decided upon decapitation. (181)

The Buntingford reorganisation was the only complete rural scheme implemented by the outbreak of war, and the only district to gain a new rural senior school during the period. As a policy, the LEA still preferred to avoid decapitation, and was unwilling to accept Buntingford as a precedent for general action elsewhere, despite the Board's enthusiasm for such schemes. Indeed after 1936 Hertfordshire presented the paradox of comprehensive modern developments underway in Buntingford and a reactionary protection of individual all-age schools predominating nearly everywhere else. In 1936 Bloom had incorporated Buntingford and six other rural senior schools, serving a total of 45 villages, into his county reorganisation proposals.(182) His accompanying report on progress to date was acerbic -

"Reorganisation of the rural schools of Hertfordshire may be said to have made no headway at all."(183) 12% of them had been reorganised, compared with the national rural average of 27%.(184) Bloom's tone hinted at his frustration as he asserted no evidence existed to suggest rural children became "urbanised" by being concentrated in senior schools. He deprecated the enforced limitations of space, specialist teaching and competition placed upon older pupils in village schools. While recognising the "serious obstacle" to reorganisation presented by the 100 rural voluntary schools, he commended an unspecified LEA - almost certainly Suffolk - which had negotiated a county-wide agreement with the denominational authorities enabling an equitable reorganisation into junior and senior schools to occur as swiftly as finances permitted.(185)

The paradox, and HMI frustration, had their explanation in the LEA's continuing predilection for keeping most village children in an exclusively rural atmosphere throughout their formative years. "There were", Graveson reasserted at the HCTA's annual dinner in 1936, "two different types of education for the rural and urban children" - and no-one disagreed.(186) The Buntingford scheme had been already

publicised and agreed as particularly apt, and no doubt through pursuing it the LEA was, like Bloom, in part "holding the candle to the devil", but most of HMI's rural recommendations were rejected as unwieldy or inappropriate. The great weakness in his division of the county into numerous geographical "circles" around urban-based senior schools was that most of them contained a mix of town and country schools in their catchment areas. Thoughts of a commitment to Suffolk-style county-wide rural decapitation and an urban dominance of senior schools were anathema to county concillors. Amidst calls for "agriculture and horticulture in every school", and fears for the future of farming if Bloom's report was accepted, the county council voted unanimously to direct the education committee to ensure "a fair proportion of senior schools in rural areas."(187)

The intensity of Hertfordshire's rural vocational bias was unusual, and certainly the same forces had not conjoined in the neighbouring counties of Essex and Buckinghamshire. As early as 1923, for example, clergy, councillors and teachers in and around the market town of Dunmow, Essex, had firmly and publicly opposed any such trend.(188) Five years later, in 1928, the influential director of education, W.O.Lester Smith, confirmed that rural schools in Essex would be reorganised, without delay, alongside urban ones. (189) Different priorities prevailed in Essex, with the problems of rural employers, and the travelling associated with decapitation and centralisation, considered minimal compared with the advantages of specialist teachers, greater stimulation and increased employment opportunities for the pupils.(190) Only where rural headteachers "of rare genius" existed would reorganisation be deferred until their retirement.(191) An Essex report in 1934, and a further survey in 1935 examining developments since 1928, confirmed that this policy was implemented - although in practice badly affected by financial constraints.(192)

In Buckinghamshire, too, the LEA forged ahead with rural reorganisation from 1927 onwards, and, in marked contrast to Hertfordshire county council, had scant sympathy with local objections.(193) There was no attempt to preserve rural isolation, and every attempt to avoid giving an agricultural bias to the new senior schools serving surrounding villages. (194) Indeed, after several bruising disagreements with local objectors to rural reorganisation, in 1935 the still unabashed Buckinghamshire education committee acknowledged, with regret, the "hesitation on the part of some of those living in those areas to accept the view that this change is an educational gain."(195)

During the years 1937-39 the struggle between Board and Hertfordshire LEA over rural reorganisation was played out against the general adoption within Hertfordshire towns of the Hadow recommendations and the establishment of up-to-date senior and modern schools. For example, the Board and Bloom recommended that rural as well as urban children over eleven should have the opportunity of attending the reorganised senior schools in Hitchin.(196) Predictably, the education committee opposed the idea, preferring to persuade the school managers at the large nearby village of Offley to reorganise as a rurally-biased one form entry senior school accepting pupils from at least seven of the eleven threatened villages.(197) The only other major rural schemes contemplated seriously by the LEA centred on Tring and Watton, both small market towns serving several contributory villages. These districts were wholly agricultural, the existing schools hard-pressed educationally and financially, and any senior school easily capable of not only maintaining but also intensifying a rural bias.(198) Hitchin, Offley, Watton and Tring exemplified Hertfordshire's policy in action in the later 1930s. Ideally, the education committee still preferred all rural schools to stay all-age. When parents clamoured for better educational opportunities and managers bemoaned their

impecunity, or the Board sought to impose unacceptable solutions, active involvement in reorganisation became inevitable. In these circumstances a scheme shunning urban influences and intensifying the rural bias was deemed vital - and invariably achieved.

To the end of the period the LEA retained overwhelming local support for its policy towards rural schools. Even Labour county councillors considered the benefits worthy of acknowledgement, although condemning the policy as the corollary of decades of inadequate agricultural wages. At a council meeting in 1937 Lindgren poured scorn on those who justified village schools primarily as trainers of agricultural workers and were terrified of letting country children out of their environment. A colleague had no hesitation in completing the circular argument that

"many of those present were largely responsible for the shocking conditions in the Hertfordshire villages."(199)

On the other hand Lindgren and the Labour caucus believed the village school well worth preserving as a working class facility, and emphasised the great inconvenience distant senior schools could cause labouring families. To that significant extent they concurred with county policy. Nevertheless, despite the criticisms of motive, and perhaps because of the degree of general agreement, no-one then, or later, questioned the other results of county policy - the preservation of numerous all-age village schools, the isolation of country children from urban influences, the avoidance of group reorganisation schemes, and the limited provision of senior schools for rural pupils, all serving to expedite the imposition and maintenance of a rurally biased and vocationally orientated curriculum.

(vi)

"VERY FAIR"

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS

This section examines forty rural schools, and 208 HMI reports on them, from three perspectives - the overall standard of rural education during the inter-war years, the variations in HMI assessments of individual schools, and the impact of reorganisation. It argues that HMI confirmed the existence of a generally sound and frequently high quality education, that the dips in the "switchback" experiences of individual schools were more often due to unfortunate illness than culpable inadequacies in staff or facilities, and that reorganisation left schools in distress rather than found them that way. In short, Hertfordshire's all-age rural schools were educationally vigorous and successful, largely through achieving a synthesis with the LEA's rural education policy. Being unreorganised may have been unfashionable, but it was not synonymous with being superannuated.

Bloom, Hallidie and Howe tended to work on the principle that small schools were "inefficient", a term obviously condemnatory but subject to subtle variations in definition. Judgements about a school's overall "efficiency" emanated from a combination of considerations, including the pupil-teacher ratio, the quality of teaching, the coherence of the curriculum, the level of attainment, the classification of the children, the state of the premises and the amount of equipment. The term, therefore, incorporated economic, organisational and teaching dimensions, whose relative

importance in determining a school's overall "efficiency" fluctuated in accord with national educational fashions and economic fortunes. For instance, there was undoubtedly a positive correlation between the adoption of modern teaching methods and educational "efficiency", and, conversely, it was hard for small schools to be anything but "inefficient" in the numerous years of financial stringency. Certainly rural schools were generally inferior in facilities and greater in per-capita costs than large urban ones, and found Standards more awkward to group, but the common inference that "inefficiency" in any of these spheres was synonymous with inadequate teaching and inferior educational achievement is not substantiated by HMI reports in the logbooks of most schools examined. Ultimately the all-embracing charge of inefficiency was the justification for every school decapitation or closure, an argument used freely by Bloom to urge rural reorganisation, and far more reluctantly by the LEA to implement it. However, there exists considerable evidence that reorganisation damaged the very sound educational health of many rural schools, sometimes fatally. Although "inefficient" financially, the great majority of Hertfordshire's rural schools were well-organised and the great majority of rural children well-taught. And, as the education committee said, the schools were convenient and part of the community. From such perspectives, the county education committee was justified in flying in the face of strict economic sense and the current fashion for bigger schools.

HMI Bloom undertook nearly all the inspections upon which this claim is based. Writing in 1950, a retired Hertfordshire village headmaster remembered him twenty years earlier as

"an elderly and experienced man, who missed nothing and spoke his mind clearly and firmly."(200)

On the other hand,

"his praise was generous, and his criticism was made quietly and with a full understanding of the difficulties of circumstances and temperament which faced the teachers."(201)

This suggests Bloom made judgements within the context of what was possible, and not against a contemporary ideal. Although such pragmatism may have led to generosity, it also hints that his routine inspections were not unduly affected by any doctrinaire bias in favour of reorganisation. Indeed, although Bloom vigorously advanced the cause of district reorganisation throughout the county, his rural inspection reports did acknowledge the casualties.

The chart overleaf contains an analysis of HMI reports on the 40 rural schools during the inter-war years. Only three of these schools - Much Hadham, Hertingfordbury and Hoddesdon - ever had more than three teachers, and then only temporarily; most had just one or two. Just two - Harpenden and Hoddesdon - served old market centres expanding as a result of immigration; the rest were in villages, either static or in decline. A five point grading system has been used to summarise the reports. Each grade is based upon the combination of praise and criticism HMI gave the school - the criteria are discussed on the pages following the chart. As 208 reports were involved, ranging from unstinting admiration to unrelieved despondency, generally speaking the five grades were easily identifiable. In cases of doubt, particularly close attention has been paid to the overall "tone" of the report, and to any references to trends since the previous inspection. An asterisk accompanies the grade when HMI believed extenuating circumstances exonerated an unexpected decline in standards, and these instances inform a major part of the discussion later in the section.

HERTFORDSHIRE RURAL SCHOOLS : HMI REPORTS 1918-39

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Key:- NH = New Headteacher 5,4,3,2,1 = Grade of HMI report
JMI = All-age school reorganised as JMI

Asterisk * by a grade indicates extenuating circumstances existed to explain criticisms in the report

H.Ed Ref.	School	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
1/1/2	Anstey CE	--	--	--	5 NH	2	--	--	1 NH	--	NH	4	--	NH	--	3	--	2	3	--	--	4	NH
2/1/2	Arkley CE	--	--	--	NH	--	3	--	NH	--	2*	--	--	3*	--	--	--	--	NH	--	2	--	--
1/81/1	Ayot St.Lawrence CE	--	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/4/2	Ayot St.Peter CE	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	2	--	--	--	--	NH	3	--	--	3*	--	NH	3	--	--
1/112/3	Braughing, Jenyns CC	--	NH	--	--	4	--	--	NH 4	--	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	3*	--	--	--	--
1/45/2	Brent Pelham CE	--	--	2*	NH	3	--	--	--	3	--	3 NH	--	--	4	--	--	--	3*	--	2*	--	JMI
1/17/2	Buckland CE	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	3*	--	--	4	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	3	--	--	3
1/18/1	Clothall CE	--	NH	--	--	--	4	--	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/19/2	Digswell CE	--	--	4	--	NH	--	2*	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	--	3	--
1/20/1&2	Eastwick CE	--	--	--	--	NH	2*	--	--	3	--	--	--	3*	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--	--
1/87/6	Frogmore, Colney St CE	--	--	--	--	--	NH 3	--	--	5	--	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	--	4	--	--
1/22/1	Gilston CE	NH	NH 2	--	--	--	3	NH	--	2	3	JMI NH	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--	3
1/67/1	Great Wymondley CE	5	--	--	--	--	--	NH	5	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	NH	closed	--	--	--	--	--
1/25/1	Harpenden CE (Infs)	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	NH 3	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--
1/80/1	Hatfield Hyde CE	--	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	NH JMI	2*	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/113/15	Hertingfordbury CE	5	NH	--	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	5	NH JMI
1/100/5	High Wych CE	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	NH	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--
1/33/2	Hinxworth CC	--	--	--	NH	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	4	--	--	JMI 4	--	--	--	NH
1/93/4	Hoddesdon CE (Boys)	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	JMI	2	--	--	3	--	NH	4	--	
1/192/5	Holwell, Rands Charity	--	--	--	NH	5	--	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	4*	--	--	5	--	--	NH	--
1/134/9	Ickleford CE	4	NH	--	--	--	3*	--	--	3*	--	--	2*	--	--	3	--	--	--	2*	--	--	--
1/38/3	Kelshall CE	--	--	--	3	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/39/3	Kimpton CE	--	--	NH	2	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--	4	NH	--	--	3	--	--
1/24/2	Kinsbourne Green CE	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	NH	4	--	--	JMI 4	NH	--	2	--	3	--	3 NH	4	--	--
1/70/1	Little Berkhamsted CE	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--
1/102/2 & in school	(Much Hadham CE (Boys) (Much Hadham CE (G&I))	--	--	--	NH	3	--	--	3	Becomes mixed	3	--	see next line	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	--
1/82/1	Newnham CE	NH 2	--	--	NH	3	--	--	--	2	--	--	NH	3	--	--	--	4	--	--	JMI	3	--
1/44/3	Norton CE	--	NH	5	--	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	--	5	--	--
1/83/3	Pirton CC	--	--	--	3	--	--	NH	3*	--	--	NH	4	--	--	5	--	--	5	--	--	5	--
1/78/1	Puckeridge CE	--	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	--
1/48/1	Rushden CE	NH 3	NH NH	--	--	NH	3	--	--	--	4	--	NH	4	--	--	4	--	--	closed	--	--	--
1/75/2	Sacombe CE	--	--	NH	--	NH	2*	NH	NH	3	--	NH	--	2	JMI	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/76/1	Sandon CE	--	3*	--	4	NH	--	4	--	--	NH	4	--	--	3	--	--	4	--	--	3	--	--
1/107/5	Stapleford CE	--	2*	--	--	--	3 NH	--	--	3	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	3	--
4/27 p306	Thorley CC	NH	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1/72/1	Wallington CE	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	2	--	--	3	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	3	--	JMI
1/113/5	Wareside CE	NH	--	2	--	1	--	--	2	NH	--	--	3	--	--	NH	3	--	--	4	--	--	4
1/13/2	Waterford CE	--	--	4	--	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	--	3	--	closed	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2/24/3	West Hyde CC	--	--	--	2	--	--	2	--	--	3	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	2*	--	--	--	--

A grade 5 indicates all-round excellence, although minor recommendations for even greater achievements might have been made. These reports would typically include such comments as:-

"The Head Master and his staff are to be heartily congratulated, not only upon their scholars' attainments, but upon the keenness and freshness of the children's attitude towards their work."(202)

"The thoughtful schemes of the Head Master and his effective supervision, combined with the conscientious and capable teaching of the whole staff have been successful in maintaining this school at an excellent level of efficiency."(203)

A grade 4 report would contain more criticisms but still clearly reveal the school was containing above average standards of efficiency. Such reports would include a variety of general and particular observations like:-

"This school promises to develop into one of the best of its type, and it is pleasant to record the practical interest shown by the Managers in the more general side of the work."(204)

"The instruction in this little school is conscientiously and methodically given and the order is very good. Very satisfactory progress has been made in Arithmetic since the date of the last visit."(205)

"The standard of achievement in the essential subjects is, on the whole, very fair. Composition is good: there is room for improvement in handwriting, but spelling is notably sound. Reading is accurate, if rather lacking in expression."(206)

Grade 3 represents a broadly average level of achievement both by staff and pupils. Here praise and criticisms occur in equal proportion. The word "satisfactory" is common, but so are hopes and suggestions for improvement. Examples from the range of reports included in this category are:-

"The steady and conscientious work of the two teachers in this school has met with a reasonable measure of success and though the results in the Arithmetic tests were disappointing, the children's attainment in the fundamental subjects reach, on the whole, a satisfactory level."(207)

"It is satisfactory to note that the older scholars are now being trained to work independently and to make notes for themselves, and that steps are being taken to improve the stock of Literature."(208)

"The children show a very fair knowledge of the ground covered in History and Geography, but there is no doubt that more profit could be desired from these and from other subjects if more use was made of the local environment of the school, for teaching purposes."(209)

A major part of grade 2 reports is concerned with criticisms of the school. Some praise and encouragement are usually included, but many improvements are expected by the time of the next inspection. Sometimes there are extenuating circumstances, typified by Ickleford in 1936 when, after prolonged staff illness, Bloom wrote

"It is not surprising that the standard of attainment reached by the children has suffered, and though much hard work has been done, especially in the top class, the Head Teacher realises that he has an uphill task in front of him."(210)

Elsewhere, grade 2 reports reflect more culpable situations. Typical comments are: -

"The scheme of work is fragmentary, unilluminating, and for the most part, out of date."(211)

"In the fundamental subjects the standard attained is lower than should be expected even when allowance is made for the poor calibre of some of the pupils in attendance."(212)

The common feature of the three grade 1 reports is the formal threat to withdraw government recognition of the school.

Not surprisingly, the reports reveal that over twenty-two years the quality of education varied widely within many schools, and between them. Nevertheless, significant patterns emerge both generally, and within particular yet overlapping categories of schools - notably (i) those reorganised or closed, (ii) those with inadequate premises or headteachers, and (iii) those with marked variations in performance.

Overall, the 208 reports show that twenty of the forty schools never fell below the "satisfactory" grade 3. Out of these twenty, six schools were always in grade 4 or 5 - Clothall, Harpenden, Hertingfordbury, Hinxworth, Holwell and Norton. Another seven were above grade 3 most of the time - Ayot St. Lawrence, Braughing, Frogmore, Kinsbourne Green, Pirton, Rushden and Sandon. The other seven were always at least grade 3, if rarely or never above that level - Buckland, High Wych, Kelshall, Little Berkhamsted, Much Hadham, Puckeridge and Waterford.

Of the twenty schools which received unsatisfactory reports, eight had just one each - Digswell, Eastwick, Great Wymondley, Hatfield Hyde, Hoddesdon, Kimpton, Kinsbourne Green and Stapleford. In three of these schools - Digswell, Eastwick and Hatfield Hyde - HMI acknowledged the coinciding staff changes and illnesses as extenuating factors. These cases will be discussed further in a different context later.

Twelve schools remain. Three had their official recognition threatened by HMI - Thorley, Anstey and Wareside. Nevertheless, all three survived, Anstey recovering rapidly, and Wareside more slowly and painfully. Although Thorley remained listed, no further HMI reports on the school have been found, so its later level of attainment

is unknown. The other nine - Arkley, Ayot St.Peter, Brent Pelham, Gilston, Ickleford, Newnham, Sacombe, Wallington and West Hyde - had an unenviable feature in common, at least one long period fraught with educational difficulties. For Ayot St.Peter these years were 1922-27 and 1934, for Brent Pelham 1919-20 and 1936-39, for Gilston 1918-22 and 1926, for Ickleford 1928-30 and 1935-37, for Newnham 1918-22 and 1925-28, for Sacombe 1927 until closure in 1932, for Wallington and West Hyde most of the decade after the Armistice, and for Arkley most of the period after 1927.

The 208 reports can be considered without reference to individual schools. 23 reports - 11% - were adjudged grade 5, 56 - 26.9% - adjudged grade 4, and 95 - 45.7% - adjudged grade 3. These 174 reports represent 83.6% of the total. The variable fortunes of the dozen schools mentioned in the previous paragraph cannot overshadow the fact that the great majority of Hertfordshire's country children were well-taught, and many very well-taught.

Limitations of sites and buildings played a part in restricting standards of achievement in surprisingly few rural schools, and never to the point of rendering standards unsatisfactory. Educational frustrations stemming from these inadequacies were recorded by HMI in only six cases, a very small proportion bearing in mind this ostensibly crippling factor was a major charge commonly levelled against rural schools. Although Bloom no doubt bore such extenuating circumstances in mind, his reports prior to their refurbishment reveal that all six schools were still educationally very sound, usually more than merely "satisfactory".(213)

In 1919 HMI Bloom and Dr Hyslop Thomson, the county medical officer, had brought the accumulation of structural and

sanitary defects to the urgent attention of the LEA and voluntary managers.(214) As a direct result, in 1920 30 council urban and rural schools received attention, and after a financial "freeze" in 1921, the work continued throughout the early 1920s.(215) Voluntary school managers ploughed a lonelier furrow, but by 1925 Thomson's fourteen assistant medical officer's were describing sanitary conditions as "generally satisfactory" or "all in order and well looked after".(216) In just a few voluntary schools, mainly in struggling villages around Hitchin and Baldock, were conditions "very poor".(217) The overall impression is one of progress sufficiently consistent to satisfy this sizeable group of medical practitioners. By 1928 they were finding "no serious defects" to report, and all necessary works well in hand.(218)

The combination of the economic depression and the rising standards of facilities expected in schools made "adequacy" harder for small voluntary schools to maintain as the 1930s progressed. In the second half of the decade Thomson and his colleagues made a point of noting the glories of new urban council schools to emphasise the lack of modernisation in some old rural voluntary ones.(219) Certainly the LEA ensured its own rural schools were updated, a process benefitting from the intensive county council programme during the 1930s to bring main drains and water supplies to most villages.(220) Equally certainly, some voluntary schools kept their slow combustion stoves, oil lamps, pumps and trough closets, but most had them replaced, if belatedly, and, as Bloom's reports indicate, such factors rarely compromised the children's education.(221)

In practice, far greater threats were posed by the vagaries of headteachers. They were, of course, of critical importance in one or two teacher schools; their illness threatened disaster for the children, and their incompetence

ensured it. Such misfortunes were not infrequent, and their effect was invariably dramatic. Nevertheless, HMI, the LEA and managers were not averse to vigorous action to combat ineptitude, and as noted earlier, schools did recover. For example, in 1921 HMI had unstinting praise for Anstey, but four years later official recognition was in doubt when standards plummeted after a new appointment.(222) Great Wymondley and Wareside suffered similar stark reversals of fortunes for the same reason.(223) Great Wymondley's poor record probably hastened its closure, but Anstey and Wareside successfully reestablished their reputations under new and dynamic leadership.(224) The appointment of youthful and inexperienced headteachers to village schools could have much the same effect, as HMI witnessed at Sacombe, Thorley and Arkley.(225)

The other major factor contributing to unsatisfactory reports was the prolonged ill-health of headteachers, and invariably HMI acknowledged such extenuating circumstances. The lengthy illnesses and absences of headteachers at Eastwick, Buckland, Holwell and Ayot St.Peter accounted for the severe, although temporary, problems with order and organisation recorded by Bloom in 1923, 1925, 1932 and 1934 respectively.(226) Digswell and Braughing were each struck by a concentrated sequence of staff changes and illnesses which blighted their hitherto particularly sound educational records.(227) Nevertheless, at these schools - as at Pirton which faltered after a complete change of staff in 1924-2 - Bloom was justified in his optimism that the new appointments were sound.(228) In marked contrast were the isolated examples of Ickleford and Arkley where the recurrent bouts of ill-health in staff and headteachers undermined educational standards for several years at a time.(229)

During the 1930s eleven of the forty schools in the survey were decapitated or closed when the combined forces of educational ideology and financial economy proved irresistible. Of these eleven, three were adjudged less than satisfactory in the triennial reports preceding these changes. Sacombe, which became JMI in 1931 and closed in 1932, and Buckland, which was decapitated in 1939, had previous reports indicating a few strengths but a greater number of specific weaknesses, and Great Wymondley, which closed in 1934, had hardly any redeeming features at its 1931 inspection.(230)

Out of the remaining eight schools in this category, there seems little doubt pupils were receiving a fine well-balanced education in seven, and a consistently satisfactory one in the eighth. Four of these schools were reorganised as JMIs. The degree of adversity decapitation wrought varied, but in all cases reorganisation started an educational decline and certainly was not the result of one. Coherent all-age syllabuses were shattered, small school were made smaller, and the economic forces mitigating against their educational success became greater. Thus, in 1926 HMI was impressed with the new schemes and "modern methods of teaching" at Kinsbourne Green.(231) These were subsequently "very thoroughly and painstakingly" developed, only for decapitation to dislocate developments in 1928, and render recovery harder by leaving the backward older pupils in the village school.(232) Newnham received high praise in 1934, but in 1937 it became a JMI with 25 pupils, and in 1938 HMI admitted that now, single-handed,

"the Head Mistress finds it difficult in the circumstances to do full justice to all the children, but she is to be congratulated on the way she has dealt with the situation."(233)

The story was similarly depressing at the much-praised school at Hinxworth, and the very sound, if less dynamic, one at Hatfield Hyde, each losing both staff and direction after decapitation, and Hatfield Hyde closing within two

years.(234) At a fifth school, Brent Pelham, the quality of education improved steadily throughout the 1920s, with most aspects of work highly commended in 1931.(235) In 1933 the school roll increased from 34 to 54 through amalgamation with a neighbouring village, but neither community benefited as economies meant merely the replacement of a mistress by an Uncertificated assistant. (236) In 1935, and again in 1937, Bloom acknowledged the decline brought about by two teachers coping with such numbers spread over eleven age groups.(237)

Three of the schools were closed while still all-age. Ayot St.Lawrence closed in 1930, but in 1927 Bloom had remarked on its "excellent tone" and "sound training".(238) Eastwick closed in 1943, but in 1935 had been "pleasantly and efficiently" run, with the children well-motivated and well-behaved.(239) Rushden ceased to exist in 1936, and Bloom's report in 1933 effectively highlights the village's subsequent loss -

"The Head Mistress and her assistants are working conscientiously and methodically along carefully prepared lines. The children are well-mannered and interested in their work; they talk readily and apply themselves to their work generally, with satisfactory results. Three of the ten children in the upper class are mentally retarded, but appear to be making satisfactory progress. The others are doing well."(240)

Throughout the period, it was such comments as these which were typical of Hertfordshire village schools.

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141. HRO HCC2/98 CP68 FGPSC 29:5:22 pp24-28, CP96 HEC 12:6:22 pp23-27.
142. BL Herts Mercury 22:7:22 p9 cols3-6.
143. BL Herts Advertiser 22:7:22 p4 cols3-5.
144. Ibid.

145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. BL H&E Observer 30:10:26 p3 cols2-3.
148. Ibid., and Herts Advertiser 13:5:27 p13 col2.
149. HRO HCC2/100 CP178 FGPSC 22:12:22 pp30-31; HCC2/107 CP165 HEC 17:10:24 pp26-27.
150. BL H&E Observer 17:1:25 p2 cols5-6.
151. HRO HCC2/103 CP147 HEC 19:10:23 pp32-33; HCC2/105 CP39 HEC 31:3:24 pp41-42.
152. HRO HCC2/103 CP147 HEC 19:10:23 p32.
153. HRO HCC2/126 CP93 SRC 7:6:29 pp2-3; HCC2/127 CP153 27:9:29 pp2-4; HCC2/129 CP50 HEC 11:4:30 p39.
154. Ibid.
155. HRO HCC2/130 CP181 SRC 30:5:30 pp11-12; HCC2/131 CP152 SRC 12:9:30 pp17-19.
156. Ibid., and HCC2/131 CP178 HEC 3:10:30 pp34-35.
157. HRO HCC2/127 CP153 SRC 27:9:29 pp13-15; BL Herts Express 12:10:29 p8 cols5-6.
158. HRO HCC2/124 CP204 SRC 16:11:28 pp1-2; HCC2/126 CP82 FGPSC 3:6:29 pp20-21 & CP93 7:6:29 pp18-20.
159. HRO HCC2/130 CP85 FGPSC 6:6:30 pp9-11.
160. Ibid., p10.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid., pp11-12.
163. Ibid., pp13-15.
164. HRO HCC2/133 CP9 SRC 6:3:31 pp8-9; HCC2/134 CP78 SRC 15:5:31 pp10-11; HCC2/135 CP140 SRC 18:9:31 p6.
165. HRO HCC2/146 CP85 HEC 22:6:34 pp29-30; HCC2/148 CP192 HEC 22:1:35 pp44-46; HCC2/151 CP125 HEC 30:9:35 pp39-41; HCC2/155 CP134 HEC 2:10:36 p45; BL Herts Mercury 17:8:34 p7 col5; H&C Reporter 25:1:35 p7 col4.
166. HRO HCC2/162 CP81 HEC 20:6:38 p60.
167. HRO HCC2/136 CP226 HEC 15:1:32 pp5-10.
168. Ibid.

169. HRO HCC2/137 CP36 HEC 8:4:32 p3.
170. Ibid.
171. HRO HCC2/139 CP131 HEC 10:10:32 pp92-93.
172. HRO HCC2/146 CP85 HEC 22:6:34 pp16-18.
173. HRO HCC2/142 CP75 HEC 23:6:33 pp72-73; HCC2/148 CP192 HEC 22:1:35 pp45-46; HCC2/150 CP76 HEC 21:6:35 pp52-53; HCC2/152 CP175 HEC 17:1:36 pp48-4; BL H&E Observer 25:1:35 p7 cols4-5.
174. BL Herts Advertiser 13:5:32 p6 cols1-4.
175. HRO HCC2/135 CP140 SRC 18:9:31 pp1-5.
176. Ibid.
177. HRO HCC2/153 CP30 HEC 30:3:36 pp14-15.
178. BL Herts Mercury 6:11:36 p12 cols3-5.
179. HRO HCC2/157 CP50 HEC 9:4:37 pp12-13 & 111.
180. Ibid., and HCC2/159 CP148 HEC 1:10:37 pp55-56.
181. HRO HCC2/164 CP186 HEC 16:1:39 p97; HED1 17/2 Buckland CE 28:6:39 and HMI report received 2:6:39.
182. PRO ED19/586 HMI Hertfordshire County: Report on the progress of reorganisation of Public Elementary Schools on Hadow lines, with suggestions for a comprehensive scheme for the whole County: February 1936 pp11-24.
183. Ibid., p6.
184. Ibid., and ED11/297 B of Ed memorandum on Reorganisation 1936 p2.
185. PRO ED19/586 op cit pp6-8. It seems likely Bloom had in mind B of Ed Pamphlet No93 An Experiment in Rural Education, issued in 1933, based upon Suffolk.
186. BL Herts Mercury 26:6:36 p11 cols1-3.
187. Ibid., 26:11:37 p16 cols3-7.
188. BL Essex Chronicle 26:1:23 p2 cols3-4.
189. ERO 106 EEC Report on the Organisation of Elementary Schools, December 1928.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid., p5.

192. ERO 106 EEC Reorganisation of Elementary Schools in Rural Areas, 1934; CLC Education in Essex 1928-1935 pp7 & 23-33.
193. BL Bucks Advertiser 12:11:27 p2 cols1-3, 21:6:29 p12 col4, 19:5:33 p4 cols1-2, 25:1:35 p3 cols4-5.
194. Ibid., and 25:10:35 p9 col5, 22:11:35 p9 col1, 18:4:37 p8 cols1-7.
195. BRO Report of Joint Meeting of the Elementary & Higher Education Sub-Committees 17:1:35 p109.
196. HRO HCC2/154 CP84 HEC 22:6:36 pp47-51.
197. Ibid., and HCC2/157 CP50 HEC 9:4:37 pp111-112; HCC2/158 CP93 HEC 21:6:37 pp31-32; BL Herts Express 21:5:38 p5 cols1-2.
198. HRO HCC2/162 CP81 HEC 20:6:38 pp53-54; HCC2/167 CP131 HEC 4:10:39 pp143-144. The 1936 Education Act had a dramatic effect on these centres - see pages 284-285
199. BL Herts Mercury 26:11:37 p16 cols3-7.
200. Bell, op cit p78.
201. Ibid.
202. HRO HEd1 83/3 Pirton CC HMI report received 19:3:32.
203. HRO HEd1 44/3 Norton CE HMI report received 26:6:33.
204. HRO HEd1 19/2 Digswell CE HMI report received 7:8:20.
205. HRO HEd1 33/2 Hinxworth CC HMI report received 5:6:23.
206. HRO HEd1 48/1 Rushden CE HMI report received 15:12:30.
207. HRO HEd1 70/1 Little Berkhamsted CE HMI report re visit 6:2:34.
208. HRO HEd1 100/5 High Wych CE HMI report received 24:6:26.
209. Much Hadham CE MI HMI report received 12:4:37 - logbook in school possession.
210. HRO HEd1 134/9 Ickleford CE HMI report received 19:1:37.
211. HRO HEd1 1/2 Anstey CE HMI report received 19:12:22.
212. HRO HEd2 24/3 West Hyde CC HMI report received 4:9:24.
213. HRO HEd1 134/9 Ickleford CE HMI reports received 25:9:23 & 7:7:26; HEd1 25/1 Harpenden CE HMI reports received 24:2:19 & 2:12:25; (ref. continued overleaf)

- Hed1 39/3 Kimpton CE HMI reports received 21:10:24 & 26:4:27; Hed1 24/2 Kinsbourne Green CE HMI reports received 6:5:19, 6:12:22 & 3:2:26; Hed1 45/2 Brent Pelham CE HMI reports received 14:5:20, 18:7:22 & 19:7:26; Hed1 76/1 Sandon CE HMI reports received 11:4:19 & 24:6:21.
214. HRO Hed4/26 pp382-383 CSMO Ann Rep 1919; Hed1 48/1 Rushden CE HMI report received 22:3:19; Hed1 24/2 Kinsbourne Green CE HMI report received 6:5:19.
215. HRO Hed4/26 pp499-500 HEC 21:6:20; HCC2/98 CP70 CSMO Ann Rep 1921 p26 & CP68 FGPSC 29:5:22 pp28-32; HCC2/102 CP74 CSMO Ann Rep 1922 p30 & CP96 HEC 15:6:23 pp4-8; HCC2/105 CP39 HEC 31:3:24 pp25-26, 42-43 & 45-46; HCC2/106 CSMO Ann Rep 1923 p29.
216. HRO HCC2/114 CP80 CSMO Ann Rep 1925 pp33-35.
217. Ibid.
218. HRO HCC2/126 CP92 CSMO Ann Rep 1928 p40.
219. HRO HCC2/158 CP78 CSMO Ann Rep 1936 p20; HCC2/162 CP63 CSMO Ann Rep 1937 p11; HCC2/166 CP62 CSMO Ann Rep 1938 p15.
220. HRO HCC2/150 CP56 CSMO Ann Rep 1934 p14; HCC2/154 CP66 CSMO Ann Rep 1935 pp45-46; HCC2/158 CP78 CSMO Ann Rep 1936 p21; HCC2/166 CP62 CSMO Ann Rep 1938 p43.
221. Ibid.
222. HRO Hed1 1/2 Anstey CE HMI reports re visits 20:10:21, 4:12:22 & 13:2:25.
223. HRO Hed1 67/1 Great Wymondley CE HMI reports received 28:1:25 & 28:3:31; Hed1 113/5 Wareside CE HMI reports received 16:4:20, 2:6:22 & 14:12:25.
224. HRO Hed1 67/1 Great Wymondley CE 2:8:34; Hed1 1/2 Anstey CE HMI report re visit 1:6:28; Hed1 113/5 Wareside CE HMI report received 31:5:29.
225. HRO Hed1 75/2 Sacombe CE HMI report received 25:7:23; Hed4/27 pp306-307 FGPSC 31:5:21; Hed2 1/2 Arkley CE HMI report received 3:11:37.
226. HRO Hed1 20/2 Eastwick CE HMI report received 27:7:23; Hed1 17/2 Buckland CE HMI report re visit 4:12:25; Hed1 192/5 Holwell, Rand's Charity HMI report re visit 11:2:32; Hed1 4/2 Ayot St. Peter CE HMI report received 4:6:34.
227. HRO Hed1 19/2 Digswell CE HMI report re visit 3:10:24; Hed1 112/3 Braughing, Jenyns CC HMI report received 30:10:35

228. Ibid., and HEd1 19/2 Digswell CE HMI report received 11:6:28; HEd1 83/3 Pirton CC HMI reports received 17:7:25 & 25:3:29
229. HRO HEd1 134/9 Ickleford CE HMI reports received 6:12:29 & 19:1:37; HEd2 1/2 Arkley CE HMI report received 21:2:27 and numerous entries in mid 1930s.
230. HRO HEd1 75/2 Sacombe CE 8:6:31 & 18:3:32 and HMI reports received 5:5:26 & 27:7:30; HEd1 17/2 Buckland CE 28:6:39 and HMI reports received 30:4:36 & 5:6:39; HEd1 67/1 Great Wymondley CE 2:8:34 and HMI report received 28:3:31.
231. HRO HEd1 24/2 Kinsbourne Green CE HMI report received 3:2:26.
232. Ibid., HMI report and Diocesan Inspector's report received 11:3:29.
233. HRO HEd1 82/1 Newnham CE HMI reports re visits 21:3:34 & 2:3:38.
234. HRO HEd1 33/2 Hinxworth CC 21:9:31, 2:8:35, 16:9:35 and HMI reports received 22:6:32 & 27:11:35; HEd1 80/1 Hatfield Hyde CE 6:10:30, 17:4:31 & 29:7:32 and HMI reports received 10:6:21, 17:3:24, 30:8:27 & 5:1:32.
235. HRO HEd1 45/2 Brent Pelham CE HMI reports received 18:7:22, 19:7:26, 2:8:28 & 9:12:31.
236. Ibid., HMI report received 16:1:35.
237. Ibid., HMI reports received 16:1:35 & 7:10:37.
238. HRO HEd1 81/1 Ayot St. Lawrence CE 16:4:30 and HMI report received 17:11:27. In all these schools, the logbooks show no change in circumstances, and especially not in headteachers, to cause HMI's latest assessment not to be accurate at the time of reorganisation.
239. HRO HEd1 20/1 Eastwick CE 21:4:43 and HMI reports received 30:5:35 & 23:3:38.
240. HRO HEd1 48/1 Rushden CE 23:12:36 and HMI report received 24:9:33.

CHAPTER FOUR

BIAS AND VOCATIONALISM IN URBAN SCHOOLS

(1)

INTRODUCTION

WHAT BIAS?

Definitions of Technical Education and Handicraft were never clear in Hertfordshire, and never recorded. The distinction sometimes seemed obvious, but the more it was examined the hazier it became, especially when the two activities met in the large urban Practical Instruction Centres. Handicraft was for pupils over 12, although the age later dropped to 11. It comprised woodwork and metalwork, but later incorporated all manner of crafts. It was essentially practical, but it did involve a theoretical study of materials and their uses. In theory it was non-vocational, but it prospered primarily as a preparation for specialised education and training - from which it was sometimes indistinguishable. Technical Education had a more vocational purpose, although clouds of educational and political rhetoric blurred the border between training and education while trying to ensure that some boundary was maintained. Technical Education was primarily intended for children aged 14 and over, but increasingly 13 year olds were accepted on specialised courses, and, towards the end of the period, many aged 12 and some aged 11. Much technical education was given in separate centres and institutes, but these were frequently the same buildings

used for Handicraft, and sometimes the tuition came from the same instructors.

For the purposes of this chapter, and particularly in the light of the evolving nature of both groups of subjects, Practical Instruction has been defined as the range of Handicraft and Domestic Subjects remaining under the control of their respective county organisers, R.R.Bunn and Miss M.I.Barnes, and Technical Education has been defined along Lord Eustace Percy's lines as advanced "education for industry and commerce." Practical Instruction was compulsory and meant to be universal; Technical Education was an option and meant to be selective. Although the next two sections discuss the phenomenal growth of Practical Instruction, and the subsequent three sections analyse the evolution of Technical Education, in 1918 these distinction were unclear in Hertfordshire - and this in itself is an important point. The prolonged wrestling with these issues, and the eventual clarification of them, therefore casts much light upon county-wide perceptions of the nature and purpose of elementary education. This chapter identifies the transformation of disparate developments in manual instruction into a coherent pattern of practical and technical education. In this process some features remained confined to elementary schools while others eventually transcended sector boundaries, but they all reflected determined local efforts to match local educational developments to local economic needs. Frequently individual towns, districts and boroughs held far stronger views on the direction of their educational developments than the county education committee. In a period of rapid urban growth, accompanied by the much vaunted county policy allowing local district autonomy, this allowed idiosyncrasies full rein.

The LEA was far from unwilling to foster practical instruction at all levels of elementary education in accordance with the 1918 Education Act, and subsequent Board recommendations, despite the recurrent government calls for financial stringency. The LEA valued the vocational element highly, and, as in rural education, modern educational methods became the means of attaining an updated version of more traditional elementary educational ends. By the mid-1930s the marked developments in many Hertfordshire towns were contributing to a pattern of elementary education clearly fulfilling government policies and yet also very sensitive to local pressures. The process was helped by the LEA's much-practised ability to place a favourable interpretation upon government pronouncements. An important example occurred in 1929, when raising the leaving age to fifteen seemed imminent. With this in mind, Captain Morris, chairman of the education committee, reiterated Sir Charles Trevelyan's hope that LEAs would not pay excessive attention to "bookish learning" and forget that children "should be taught that doing was as fine a thing as thinking." (1) Members applauded their chairman's analysis that the Labour President of the Board of Education thought much as they did. (2) The local press certainly got the message, a leader soon afterwards praising the county's determined policy of intensifying the practical bias in elementary schools and severely limiting the expansion of "bookish" secondary schools. (3)

By and large, throughout the inter-war years Hertfordshire education committee found itself basking in the praise of HMIs as well as local councils, teachers and newspapers for its developments in practical instruction and technical education. Each interested party tended to concentrate upon either the means or the ends of this multi-faceted aspect of the curriculum, and find something different to value. Thus HMI noted the moves to integrate theory and practice more richly, teachers associated the greater

financial investment with a greater public appreciation of their work, the local councils welcomed the fine tuning of elementary education to their areas' needs, and newspaper editors praised the LEA's prudent policy of investment in useful career and household skills.

By 1939 the ad hoc vocational initiatives after 1918 had evolved into a full-scale technically-biased urban education policy, with important repercussions for elementary education. The range of practical instruction courses was not limited to urban schools - no more than gardening projects were limited to rural schools - but the concentration of schools, housing estates, factories and offices in the expanding towns at a time of general economic anxiety made an urban vocational bias particularly attractive to parents, councillors and employers, and relatively easy to implement. The process both blurred and heightened the distinction between elementary and secondary education, with several apparently unconnected developments contributing to the paradox. The proliferation of technical and commercial courses encouraged many pupils to pursue full-time or part-time education beyond the age of fourteen, and certainly obliged the provision of increasingly well-equipped senior schools and technical institutes. The secondary schools were also acutely aware of public anxieties about employment, and introduced Commerce courses for their less academically successful pupils as a result. The "modern" secondary schools were provided to satisfy local demand for good quality commercially and technically orientated education in institutions accorded higher status, and awarded higher grants, than elementary schools. What started out as an extension of elementary education after 1918 was on the verge of becoming a sector of education in its own right by 1939, taking on attributes from elementary and secondary schools alike. In this sense it played a significant role in the conceptual decapitation of elementary education.

For Hertfordshire, it was a case of extending elementary education and realigning secondary education to cater in their distinctive, yet complementary, ways for local needs. The LEA considered itself very successful at this task, not least because several factors kept the boundary between the sectors clear, if also a little more flexible. Throughout the period the Domestic Subjects organiser promulgated a peculiarly working class vision of laundry work, housewifery and cooking. In this context it is significant that the LEA invested heavily in her initiatives, and did so without complaint in times of recession. The rise of the urban bias, and its relationship with local economic needs, served to strengthen the belief that only a small proportion of elementary pupils were suited to a grammar school education. With the straitened job market there arose the powerful argument that a greater diversity of post-eleven courses was required rather than a proliferation of academic ones out of which relatively few careers could evolve. The fact that practical instruction in the form of handwork, needlework, and gardening occupied an ever-increasing amount of time in elementary schools, often from the age of ten, ironically added lustre to the conviction that grammar schools represented an alien culture from which it would be hard for most elementary pupils to benefit.

(ii)

"..HIS RECENT EXPERIENCES UNDER THE ADMIRALTY WILL RENDER HIM EXCEPTIONALLY FITTED FOR THE WORK."

THE INEXORABLE RISE OF BOYS' HANDICRAFT

It was because all aspects of Practical Instruction - woodwork, metalwork, laundrywork, housewifery, needlework and cooking - were considered utilitarian and vocational, and definitely elementary, that Hertfordshire education committee rarely hesitated to encourage them - whatever the economic climate or educational fashion.

After the war, the county education committee started out as it meant to continue. In January 1919 most members were relieved to learn that the supervisor of handwork, R.R.Bunn, would be released shortly by the Admiralty.(4) To the admiration of county councillors, prior to his voluntary enlistment Bunn had transformed school handwork into the mass production of Army and Red Cross equipment.(5) The elementary school representatives on the county education committee had objected strongly to Bunn's excessive mimicry of industrial and commercial practices during the war, and they utterly condemned such approaches in peacetime, but, in a revealing exercise of his personal influence, Sir Charles Longmore intervened during the emotive debate to argue conclusively that Bunn's record was singularly appropriate for developing vocational schemes in the light of the Education Act.(6) Longmore's finger was firmly on the local pulse. In June 1920 Hertfordshire's Education Act Scheme Sub-Committee issued an interim report - in the

event, its only one - which not only emphasised the proposed intensification of practical instruction locally, but also openly mocked the government's delay in recognising the ordinary elementary school was too bookish in character.

(7) Although by 1921 the urgency to formalise and introduce an Education Act Scheme scheme was fading fast, the LEA implemented a modified programme which ensured all children received handwork instruction until 12, followed by specialised handicraft for boys and domestic subjects for girls until 14. By May 1924 Bunn's urban Handicraft centres totalled 18, and were attended by 3,005 pupils each week.(8) Another 805 pupils in 38 schools undertook recognised handicraft lessons with peripatetic instructors. (9) HMI praised the "steady progress" since the war.(10)

Premises were hard to find, and instructors harder, but as both became available the LEA determinedly increased the number of centres in towns and larger villages despite the lingering financial stringency in the mid-1920s.(11) At the end of 1926 3,550 (66.1%) of the 5,311 boys aged 12 and over were receiving weekly handicraft tuition.(12) Bunn's report that year reaffirmed he perceived practical instruction more in vocational than educational terms, and certainly he knew education committee members' predilections well enough to justify a plea for eight more instructors on the grounds that handicraft was vital for those likely to follow manual pursuits in either town or country.(13) At a county conference in 1927, HMI Bloom noted the LEA's determined efforts to develop this aspect of the curriculum, and the steady stream of further grants and instructors indicates his praise was more than a conference blandishment.(14) Numbers continued to rise sharply, and by the end of 1928 there were 25 instructors teaching 4,600 (73.9%) of the 6,227 Hertfordshire boys aged 12 and over in 18 schools and 70 full-time and part-time centres.(15)

Bunn's approach altered only slightly to accommodate the greater attention given as a result of the Hadow report to the educational break at 11. Possibly the publication of the Board's Suggestions led to his additional justification of Handicraft as a major contributor to an active approach to general education with children under eleven, but it was still deemed a necessary adult skill with strong vocational overtones for those over that age.(16) In 1929 he encouraged the trend for older boys to spend a whole day, not half a day, each week at centres,

"doing advanced work with a view to apprenticeship later on to some trade where craft skill is essential to their advancement."(17)

In 1930 he promoted increasing diversity in senior Handicraft syllabuses, and work in various metals became popular in the specialist centres.(18)

Fundamentally old attitudes failed to die, and Handicraft continued to be considered a discipline in its own right, requiring training and practice from an early age. With reference to younger children, Bunn merely blended traditional utilitarian arguments with modern educational ones. In 1928, for example, he informed the education committee:

"Knowledge or experience gained from books can form no substitute for actual participation in work or play. The arts and industries are among the greatest factors in social progress, and the schools should provide experience and training in those manual processes which make for social efficiency."(19)

To Bunn, social efficiency for most individuals meant productiveness in manual occupations, for which Handwork was calculated to develop many appropriate general and specific skills.(20) Making a picture book epitomised his highly disciplined type of task and approach - to accomplish this a young child must measure and divide, know the qualities of paper, card, cloth and glue, master various tools, collect and select the contents, and understand something of the painters and their work.(21) Thus the junior elementary

syllabus laid very firm and particular foundations for the senior one.

It is not surprising to find the LEA reluctant to economise at the expense of Handicraft in the early 1930s. In 1931 some new centres, equipment and staff were postponed, but in December 1932 Handicraft and Domestic Subjects were expressly excluded from the Special Expenditure Committee's strictures as factors of "great importance" in the "after life" of elementary pupils.(22) Indeed, it was from 1930 that the process got under way of opening large, well-equipped, full-time centres, and ceasing to use the numerous small, ill-equipped part-time ones. Although this major shift in policy involved the provision of transport, it was accepted as the most cost-effective way of bringing good quality advanced instruction within reach of all urban and many rural senior elementary pupils.(23) The subject served a variety of school needs. In addition to domestic items, rural children constructed tools, trays, coops and hutches for Gardening and the Rural Syllabus, and urban schools made Science and Mathematics equipment.(24) In 1932 HMI deemed Handicraft provision in Hertfordshire "most satisfactory", a comment he applied also to most children's work.(25) There were 31 instructors, and their quality was rising as 29 were qualified teachers with additional Handicraft certificates.(26) The number of pupils receiving tuition had risen to 5,300, but as the population had soared, this figure represented only 70% of senior boys, a drop of 3.9% since 1928.(27) Nevertheless, the shortfall was held at about 30% from now on, despite the population growth threatening at times to overtake all urban educational developments during the 1930s.

The years 1934 to 1939 brought renewed local expansion and optimism. In 1934, as the financial situation eased, building commenced on several postponed centres, all of

which were on large urban school sites.(28) In 1935-36 the number of instructors rose to 38, and the number of pupils they taught to 6,900.(29) Many pupils were now starting three or four year specialised courses at 11 rather than 12, a reduction in age desired much earlier by the LEA but frustrated by the depression.(30)

In 1937 the Board's revised Suggestions gave a prominent section to Arts and Crafts, a feature reinforced by Memorandum 158 which urged LEAs to increase expenditure on this group of subjects - at all ages.(31) In this context, an HMI survey of Hertfordshire late in 1937 found the local situation "generally satisfactory", but now recommended a far greater range of the increasingly fashionable traditional crafts.(32) It is revealing that the LEA responded on two levels to this report. First it registered its outrage at HMI's insinuation that local provision was suddenly less than generous.(33) However, the combination of utility, traditional craftsmanship, aesthetic appreciation and disciplined training were calculated to appeal to many education committee members, and notably Graveson, as much as they did to Bunn. Certainly despite the protest the county acted quickly to provide the teachers' courses and school grants to broaden the scope of Handicraft to include weaving, basketry, printing, beaten metalwork, bookmaking, pottery, puppetry and technical drawing.(34) It is significant that Bunn's senior woodwork and metalwork groups produced much of the necessary equipment in bulk, affording a welcome solution to the education committee's concern that a prolonged training in basic transferable skills was not sacrificed in the proliferation of new crafts.(35)

In the later 1930s, Hertfordshire's infant and junior classes were spending up to 20% of each week on aspects of Art and Crafts, and seniors up to 25%.(36) The advantages,

of course, continued to be counted more in vocational than educational terms at all ages. The new wide-ranging courses for those under the age of eleven could not fail, Bunn argued, to

"alter the outlook for those children who have a practical bent rather than academic ability."(37)

The most appropriate schools after the age of eleven, he added, could then be selected for them with ease.(38)

Bunn's comments neatly summarised the attitude and the achievement of the county council throughout the period. A few elementary school children were destined for grammar schools, but most were deemed likely to work with varying degrees of skill with their hands. The sooner this training started the better for the encouragement of interests, for the inculcation of discipline, for the identification of talents, for the selection of appropriate courses, and for individual job opportunities. The inter-war years had seen an intensification of functionalism in elementary education which had engendered a curriculum increasingly taken up with vocationally orientated practical training. The emphasis upon practical activities and individual experience as a sound way of learning was reflected in and publicised by the Consultative Committee's reports, the Board's Suggestions, and imported approaches such as the Dalton Plan, and these gave the educational justification for the development of Handicraft. The belated change of name to Arts and Crafts might have heralded a wider variety of activities, but as had been made perfectly clear by Sir Charles Longmore in 1919, by the Special Expenditure Committee in 1932, and by Bunn annually in his reports, local willingness to invest heavily in this area of the curriculum remained firmly wedded to its primary value as a highly disciplined means of personal and vocational training for children of the working classes.

(iii)

"..75 PER CENT OF THE GIRLS WHO LEFT WENT INTO DOMESTIC SERVICE, MANY AS DIRECT RESULT OF THE DOMESTIC SUBJECTS TRAINING."

CONTINUITY & CHANGE IN DOMESTIC SUBJECTS

Just as Handicraft was considered particularly worthy of great encouragement for elementary school boys of all ages, so Domestic Subjects continued to epitomise the class assumptions governing girls' education in these schools. In 1918 few Hertfordshire girls were taught more than needlework and basic cookery, but by 1939 not only had these courses had been much extended, but laundrywork and a host of activities under the heading "Housecraft" also absorbed much of their time - 20% of the week for pupils over 12, and sometimes more. The syllabuses were assiduously up-dated in the light of both technological developments and educational theory, but their purpose and applicability altered very little. Indeed, that argument can be stood on its head. It was because the purpose and applicability of Domestic Subjects were held to be largely unchanging that great efforts were made to modernise the syllabuses.

Domestic Subjects were part of the Practical Instruction which LEAs had to incorporate into their development schemes under the terms of the 1918 Education Act.(39) Until 1927 Hertfordshire's chief education officers, A.J.Hallidie and his successor, S.W.Howe, supervised the gradual expansion of Domestic Subjects centres. The rural areas, which required

peripatetic instructors and a multitude of hired halls, were largely ignored at first. Although this aspect of the curriculum had no expert organiser until 1927, and no education sub-committee to mastermind developments until 1924, the sparse evidence for these early years suggests that Domestic Subjects staff and facilities expanded roughly in proportion to the school population despite the post-war recession. Certainly between 1913 and 1923 the staff nearly doubled, from 10 full-time and 3 part-time to 20 full-time instructors.(40) By 1924 the LEA was maintaining 9 permanent urban centres. There were also 13 urban centres which opened in the autumn and spring terms, and 42 villages were served by circuits in the summer term.(41)

By the mid-1920s most town girls attended a centre for one day a week during four terms spread across their final two years at school. Nevertheless the full range of courses - cookery, laundrywork and housewifery - were restricted to Watford, Hatfield and Bushey. Laundrywork and cookery were taught in Hitchin and Letchworth, but everywhere else only cookery.(42) Under Hallidie pre-war practices remained sacrosanct, and were enshrined in the 1923 county handbook.(43) The cookery was plain and economical, and the menus remained based upon the best family diet that could be gained from the average working man's wages.(44) It was deemed axiomatic that cheese-paring in the preparation of food had the twin advantages of being what the ratepayers most wanted and the pupils' families most needed.

In the mid-1920s a flurry of activity surrounded Domestic Subjects at both national and local levels which highlighted this area of the curriculum, but did little to question the validity of the traditional attitudes and utilitarian courses dominating Hertfordshire. Firstly, there were two national reports. The Consultative Committee's 1923 report

on the differentiation of the curriculum between the sexes concentrated upon secondary schools, but raised several issues relevant to all sectors of education. Witnesses believed standards were dropping, and few girls received

"as good a training in cookery and house-keeping in their homes as was given to those of a generation ago."(45)

The report confirmed that every girl definitely needed more Domestic Subjects training, but it failed to recommend approaches or define content.(46) In contrast, the 1923 report of the Wood Committee, which had investigated the causes of, and solutions to, the unpopularity of domestic service had a confident tone, and arguments convincing enough to receive wholehearted TES approval.(47) In some respects the Wood report complemented the Consultative Committee's findings, and the TES made much of the folly of incompetent girls rushing into domestic service, finding the job "repellent" because of their lack of training, and marrying solely to escape the drudgery.(48) The moral was clear. All because of the neglect of Domestic Subjects in schools, the unsuccessful maid became the unsuccessful wife, and

"the source of more than half the miseries and a great deal of the drunkenness of slum life."(49)

The Wood Report's main recommendations concerned longer and better domestic training for girls to cope with all eventualities. In short,

"the school must first teach the simple principles of domestic science, of which undeviating cleanliness and unfailing attention to detail are the chief, and then pass on to the application of these principles to the problems of the daily life that the child is going to lead, in farm, cottage, or urban villa."(50)

The evidence indicates the county council and education committee would have concurred.

Secondly, HM Woman Inspector conducted a vigorous campaign for a Domestic Subjects organiser in Hertfordshire.

It succeeded because it combined two things education committee members found particularly attractive - increased utility in elementary education, and increased cost-effectiveness in public finance. Hallidie wholeheartedly agreed with HMI, confessing his own unsuitability for further detailed direction of Domestic Subjects.(51) Female county councillors and education committee members rallied in support of such an appointment, with its promise of more widespread and comprehensive Domestic Subjects in elementary schools.(52) Almost certainly it was no coincidence that 1925 saw the first county conference for Hertfordshire Domestic Subjects instructors, organised and chaired by HMI. Her provocative theme - "How far does the present system of Domestic Subjects Instruction meet the needs of the Home?" - had resounding echoes of the Wood report.(53) The women county councillors attended, and submitted a highly favourable report to the education committee.(54) A county survey by HMI the following year made the case for an organiser unanswerable by shrewdly arguing that money, time, and skills were being wasted through the inadequate use of the existing instructors and facilities; and that with a few more of both, and a great deal of positive direction, much more could be achieved.(55)

The organiser, Miss M.I.Barnes, took office in September 1927, and rapidly redistributed equipment, redesigned courses and reinvigorated staff. She had much in her favour. She had access to the education committee through her regular reports, she enjoyed the particular support of those who had lobbied for her appointment, and in H.E.Fern she had a sympathetic and vigorous sub-committee chairman. In addition, her work coincided with a change in public attitudes towards her sphere of work. The utilitarian value of teaching household skills to girls remained unquestioned, but there was also a growing interest in Domestic Subjects' links with personal and public health. Early in Miss Barnes' regime she engaged Dr Hyslop Thomson,

the county medical officer, to lecture on "Food and Health" to her staff, and the connection remained firm.(56)

Hertfordshire's up-dated syllabuses combined economical housekeeping with the science of cookery - "food values, digestion and the laws of health, the effect of heat on various foods" - and the science of laundrywork - "the composition of soap, soda, blue etc., and the best means of softening water etc."(57) Nevertheless, although Miss Barnes' aim was to make cookery and housekeeping pleasurable "arts" rather than "mere drudgery", she continued to stress the need for the elementary school courses to pay particular attention to cheap meals, the avoidance of waste, the recycling of materials, and the virtue of making and mending.(58) This blend of health living, frugality, useful knowledge, and wide-ranging domestic skills, was accompanied by hints that such virtues as self-discipline, self-help, perseverance, patience, and happy acceptance of one's lot, thoroughly permeated the courses.(59) By design or conviction, or both, Miss Barnes ensured a clear continuity of purpose accompanied the modernisation of content and approach.

Certainly the education committee did not hesitate to develop a multitude of both urban and rural centres after 1927. By 1930 Miss Barnes' staff numbered 30. They taught in 87 centres, and 140 of the 408 classes involved all three components of Domestic Subjects.(60) Every senior girl in the county attended classes for a minimum of one day a week for a year, and most urban pupils attended for two years.(61) In 1930 comprehensive urban centres complete with furnished bedrooms, bathrooms and sitting rooms as well as kitchens and sculleries were introduced, and rural centres in larger villages began to be fitted with real laundry rooms and kitchens.(62) Nevertheless, for all the comparative luxury, it was county councillors'

recognition of the traditional utilitarian value of Domestic Subjects which led to their specific exclusion from the comprehensive cuts recommended by the Special Expenditure Committee in 1932. It was one of the few things all members of the investigating committee agreed upon, the report stating

"we are clearly of opinion that no case has been made out for reduction in respect of such subjects as cookery, handicraft and dressmaking, which may be considered as of great importance amongst the subjects useful in after life."(63)

More immediately, the report argued, Domestic Subjects could make a major contribution to the lives of working class families coping with much diminished resources.(64) In this socio-economic context, it was significant that the education committee's long-standing proposals for a College of Housecraft for older secondary school girls did not survive the depression.(65)

As a result of the convictions of education committee members, Domestic Subjects in elementary schools remained inviolate. Indeed, in October 1932 the committee approved, without question, the provision of new centres at Waltham Cross, Knebworth, Letchworth and Pirton.(66) Urban voluntary schools cooperated, opening comprehensive centres attached to large senior schools in Hatfield and Hitchen, and the headmaster's house at the Old Grammar School in Barnet was equipped as a particularly real housecraft centre.(67) By Easter 1934 there were nine housecraft houses or flats.(68) In such centres girls received extensive training in "cookery, laundrywork, housewifery, mothercraft, household needlework and everything connected with the home."(69) To service such developments, despite the years of acute economic anxiety, Miss Barnes' staff progressively increased from 30 in 1930 to 39 in 1934.(70)

The irony was that Hertfordshire remained largely unaffected by the depression, and Miss Barnes herself was moving

rapidly towards viewing modern suburbia as the domestic environment to be modelled in most Hertfordshire schools. Certainly her perception of Domestic Subjects at this time reveals some divergence of purpose between courses in towns and country. In 1933 she defended investment in Domestic Subjects in the new and restructured urban senior schools on the assumption that marriage, motherhood, and house tenancy or ownership, were but a few years away.(71) The facilities - modern kitchens and fully furnished rooms - had to reflect the increasing suburban prosperity and expectations. Conversely, however, she bemoaned the lack of housecraft in rural centres primarily because many girls

"become daily maids when they leave school.

This is especially the case in small towns or villages near these towns."(72)

With the status of service rising, and "a better type of girl" seeking such employment, she deemed extensive Domestic Subjects' tuition crucial for the rural economy in general.(73) In short, a variety of changing market forces - be they rising standards of living, suburban prosperity or rural job opportunities - demanded that greater attention everywhere be paid to her areas of expertise, and the evidence indicates both urban and rural county councillors were impressed and encouraged by her arguments.

The twin vocational purposes of Domestic Subjects, as avidly promulgated by Miss Barnes, reflected both the continuity and change in Hertfordshire's provision. The changes were indeed considerable during the mid and later 1930s. This area of the curriculum maintained a very high profile, because LEA predilections and Board policies were powerful forces working in combination to guarantee it. In 1936 the Board required all new senior schools to possess comprehensive Domestic Subjects rooms on site, but this was a practice adopted in Hertfordshire several years earlier when large urban schools were being restructured.(74)

Significantly, another rare example of the LEA pre-empting a Board recommendation for generosity also occurred in this

field, with the provision of modest supplementary subsidies to ease the restrictive requirement for cookery and needlework courses to pay their way in materials.(75)

Within a decade since 1927, Domestic Subjects had evolved from inculcating habits of frugality and absolute economy in working class families to ensuring the fulfilment of every girl's assumed aspirations. The value of Domestic Subjects, Miss Barnes publicly proclaimed in 1937,

"is now fully recognized. It is gradually raising the standards of living and it is hoped that it will help to produce happy homes."(76)

Nevertheless she was at pains to make it clear that the "happy homes" could also be those of the girls' employers. As education members thoroughly appreciated, numerous Hertfordshire elementary schoolgirls still went into private domestic service, and many more were employed in the now numerous hotels, restaurants, cafes, clubs and institutions.(77) Clearly demand remained high as the county prospered. In a statement proudly reporting that 75% of the girls leaving a school in the market town of Royston entered domestic service, "many as a direct result of the Domestic Subjects training", Miss Barnes revealed how little ambitions for the pupils had changed throughout her reign.(78) She could assume with confidence that the readers of her report - county councillors, education committee members, senior officials, and county newspaper editors - would be as satisfied as the Royston headteacher and she herself were with this educational outcome.(79)

Although Miss Barnes claimed "the theoretical side of the work is also taught so that the girls learn intelligently", the mastery of techniques seems to have transcended attempts to inculcate scientific understanding of the processes taught and practised - perhaps, ironically, a tendency encouraged by the greater range of facilities.(80)

Certainly her later reports continue to emphasise the virtues of ordered routines, working in silence and practise making perfect.(81) Reinforcing this evidence, the sole surviving detailed record of work - for the Barnet Housecraft Centre - reveals that alongside the cookery and laundrywork courses a wealth of handy household skills were undertaken ranging from the lighting of fires and the care of wood floors to the mending of chairs, laying of lino and clearing of drains.(82) Only in the last two years before the war, as Domestic Subjects and their teachers became fully integrated into the curriculum and staff of the larger senior schools, rather than just attached to them, is there strong and general evidence of a more elevated educational approach where broadening the pupils' horizons becomes as important as training the next generation of housekeepers. In such schools, Nutrition was linked to the "Keep Fit" movement, hygiene and physiology to Science and Health Education, Housewifery to Mathematics and Craft, and cookery to social occasions and entertainment.(83)

Throughout the period, Domestic Subjects in Hertfordshire had been consistently responsive to social, economic and educational changes - to more sophisticated household care and management, to more complex and readily available technology, to the rising expectations of family life, to experiential learning, and to the widening range of job opportunities in service. Nevertheless, the increasing educational significance of Domestic Subjects rested upon their production of skilled and dutiful servants, wives and mothers. In this sense, by 1939 Domestic Subjects were finally doing everything the exponents of increased national efficiency, public health and family self-sufficiency had been seeking for the last fifty years.

(iv)

**"..THE WELL KNOWN CAUTION OF THE HERTS. COUNTY COUNCIL IN
CONNEXION WITH EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE."**

**TECHNICAL EDUCATION : THE YEARS OF DISPARATE DEVELOPMENTS
1918-1926**

The 1918 Education Act obliged LEAs to draw up, and submit to the Board, comprehensive schemes for the organisation and progressive development of education within their areas, including practical and advanced instruction, and part-time continuation schooling for children over fourteen. Circular 1119 of July 1919 emphasised these schemes should look forward at least ten years. In Hertfordshire the immediate post-war years witnessed a mix of both private and public attempts to heighten the degree of technical bias in elementary and post-elementary education. These disparate developments highlight the tension between the initial desire of the LEA to curtail elementary education at fourteen, and the express wish of the more industrially and commercially orientated towns to link extended training courses to this sector. All the signs indicate that the education committee deemed the Practical Instruction courses, with their increasing breadth and intensity, a sufficient combination of education and training for the vast majority of elementary school pupils. Nevertheless, out of the various local initiatives, and the LEA's grudging concessions to urban pressures in this field, there evolved the surprisingly firm foundations for the comprehensive pattern of Technical Education which took hold in the 1930s.

The early post-war initiatives reveal the forces influencing the practical courses available to older elementary pupils - notably whether they should be avowedly vocational, or more concerned with principles than particular processes. All the initiatives came from the well-established but fast growing industrial towns of the south-west. Voluntary efforts were to the fore. In two towns technical education was a serious contender for war memorial funds. In Berkhamsted a junior technical institute was built and endowed as a war memorial by the family of Sir Richard Cooper, specifically to stimulate those determined "to get on" and attract those "who might otherwise resent a return to school." (84) As always, the LEA welcomed the privately funded initiative. (85) In Hemel Hempstead a new technical institute vied with hospital extensions and a cross as the most appropriate memorial for the borough. (86) The bitter dispute divided the borough, resulting in the erection of a modest cross with the surplus fund being shared equally between hospital and institute funds. (87) Nevertheless, the controversy highlighted the fact that contemporary concern for the future well-being of the country incorporated technical education as well as medical care. (88)

In 1920 John Dickinson & Company, the paper and stationery manufacturers with works strung along the Gade valley between Hemel Hempstead and Watford, restructured its trades school as a Day Continuation School. (89) All employees between 14 and 16 years of age attended for 6 hours a week, studying a combination of general and vocational subjects, including English Language and Literature, Civics, Arithmetic, Commercial Geography, Book Keeping, Physical Training, Nature Study, Typing, and Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing. (90) In May 1921 89 pupils attended the day school, and the various evening classes attracted 130 employees aged 18 and under. (91) As HMI noted,

"the scheme in effect provides a voluntary continuation school for the district without

any charge on the rates, since nearly all the young people of the neighbourhood find employment in the Apsley Mills."(92)

After a thorough inspection, HMI deemed the local children singularly fortunate to attend the school, and a sympathetic Board gave immediate recognition.(93)

The fact that the LEA's private encouragement of Dickinson's school was accompanied by a determined refusal to have any formal contact with it irritated Board officials.

Certainly experts in the field of technical education, including the ATI, ATTI and FBI, supported such exemplary voluntary actions in fulfilment of the objectives of the 1918 Education Act, as did Fisher himself.(94) As far as the Board was concerned, Dickinson's scheme had all the attributes of pioneering at its best - substantial resources, well-researched proposals, and experienced staff - and no doubt these very features constituted the problem it posed for the LEA. In all probability the LEA had no intention of officially supporting the yardstick against which its own provision throughout the county might be critically judged. In addition, by mid-1921 there was the distinct possibility its own scheme could be indefinitely postponed as a consequence of the recession. Typically, one Board official noted sourly,

"the attitude of the LEA is most supportive. That their sympathy is moral rather than practical probably arises from the well-known caution of the Herts. County Council in connexion with educational expenditure."(95)

Indeed, the Board's 1921 annual report claimed one of the reasons it supported such enterprises was to keep

"the value of continued education ... prominently before Education Committees and the public generally."(96)

Dickinson's school survived unscathed through economic recessions and untouched by wider educational reorganisation. It never lost the Board's financial support, or gained the LEA's. Its numbers grew to 200 day

pupils in 1938-39, and, significantly, its syllabus became increasingly vocational.(97) To all intents and purposes the school transformed itself into a part-time technical institute with a Commerce bias, becoming known within the company and locality as the Efficiency Training Centre.(98) Indeed, as early as 1921 the Board had perceived this possibility, and one official had vigorously opposed a direct grant on the grounds that it would blur the distinction between continuation and technical education. (99) In the event he was proved right, but the majority of his colleagues deemed possible closure, especially at a time of economic crisis, as "a calamity for the young people of the district."(100) The transition within the school took place with no hint of Board concern, let alone formal warning. Indeed, the important point is that the transition was a response to the forces at work within the county - and much of the country at large. The move to overt vocationalism was as popular with families as with the company, and the Board acquiesced.

In 1919 and 1920 the Board had urged LEAs to liaise with local firms "to meet the demands which industry and commerce can reasonably make upon the Schools", but significantly it was not the county council which set the pace in identifying and satisfying such needs, but Watford.(101) The redrafting of several pre-war technical courses by the borough council, accompanied by an extensive publicity campaign, threatened to create a confusing pattern of provision which overlapped the post-war elementary sector now that the leaving age had been raised to fourteen. The situation was rendered particularly tense by the LEA's lethargic compilation of its own advanced and continuation education plans in the light of the Education Act, and by Watford's suspicion that county parsimony would not only delay developments, but deprive the borough of its fair share of county resources. The bitter conflict which erupted revealed the gulf between the wide-ranging

educational developments sought by this radically-inclined borough, and the far more limited perceptions of advanced elementary and technical education still held by most education committee members. With justification, Watford believed it had placed its educational future in the hands of a LEA with little understanding of, and scant sympathy for, urban problems and aspirations. Nevertheless the borough was far from powerless, and its potential capacity to drag the LEA into expensive initiatives cast the borough's plans in a very different light to those of voluntary groups. Watford had abandoned its Part III status, but it had integrated with the county upon favourable terms, notably the possession of four extra seats on the education committee and an additional annual "special agreement" grant. It also retained its array of vigorous sub-committees, and a tendency for unilateral action.

In January 1919 Watford announced its ambitions for a Technical College embracing a Junior Technical School and senior Schools of Art, Commerce and Science.(102) As a start, it advertised its reconstituted evening classes, which included wide ranging Junior Industrial, Commercial and Art courses specifically for pupils aged thirteen and over, and with local employment opportunities firmly in mind.(103) The simultaneous revival of the Art Schools in Hertford and St.Albans, with wholehearted Board approval, through their part-time continuation courses, indicated the demand for vocationally biased technical education, and the determination to meet it, were not limited to Watford.(104)

The post-war economic recession revealed how vulnerable all publically-funded technical education was in Hertfordshire. The LEA used the opportunity to crush the urban initiatives. In 1920 Watford's plans to promote a Day Commercial Course and Day Continuation Classes were frustrated by the county council's refusal to contribute funds, and the LEA resisted

all pressure from both the borough and the Board to establish a Junior Technical School there.(105) The new Junior Industrial Art Class was suppressed on financial grounds after only a year in operation, the county withdrawing its 22% share of the costs.(106) In addition, the Evening Continuation Classes and ordinary evening classes at the School of Science and Art were cancelled for a year, and their future placed in jeopardy by a nine month dispute between the borough and LEA over the level of grant.(107) In 1922 the LEA closed the Hertford School of Art as uneconomic, and proposed to reduce staff at St.Albans "at the earliest practicable moment."(108)

The county education committee's own early initiatives in this direction were confined to the establishment of two central schools and a handful of "advanced tops" in ordinary elementary schools. In 1920 the LEA had compiled a tentative county scheme in accordance with the 1918 Act, incorporating two-year higher elementary courses "in advance of what is usually provided at an elementary school" for the estimated 33% of pupils "sufficiently intelligent to finish the ordinary elementary school course by the age of 12."(109) To the undisguised relief of J.L.Pank, chairman of the education committee, and most of his colleagues, the plethora of central schools and classes in the host of rented, renovated and extended buildings earmarked by the LEA, did not materialise.(110)

The few "advanced tops" the LEA eventually provided had a practical and, increasingly, a technical bias, and, in the absence of anything better, they were popular. In 1924, for example, an audience of Barnet parents was obviously delighted that children just failing the secondary school scholarship, and others "who had shown special aptitude in the general test by his Majesty's inspector", would be eligible for entry to a new top class.(111) Admission was

a minor if not a major privilege. If perceived as a vocational extension of elementary education, as argued by Pank's successor, Canon Glossop, it was a belated recognition by the LEA of local needs; if viewed as a substitute for secondary education, as implied by a school manager addressing the parents, it seemed decidedly second-rate in concept and content.(112) The children were taught French, Science, and advanced Mathematics, and, the headmaster explained,

"for those who desired it, there would be classes with a commercial bias, for instruction in short-hand, book-keeping, and, probably, typewriting. Others, who were likely to go in for handiwork, would be able to spend extra time at the handicraft centre."(113)

A Board inquiry in 1925, prompted by its desire to promote such instruction, although preferably in central schools, revealed that there were only four "advanced tops" in the county - Barnet, Kimpton, Letchworth and Royston - although all except the Letchworth school allowed pupils throughout their district to seek admission.(114) The practical, commercial and mathematical biases were evident in all the classes.(115) Two years later, their alternative function as the poor family's secondary school, with an appropriately utilitarian curriculum to match, was made explicit when a fifth "top" was established at Knebworth, for "those brighter pupils" in the district "precluded by various reasons from attending secondary schools."(116)

The county council established only two central schools, one in each of the largest towns, Watford and St.Albans. Both were selective, and both had pupil-teacher centres attached to them. Like the "tops", they were achieved cheaply, one by merely renaming Watford's Higher Elementary School in 1919, and the other by putting the spare daytime space in St.Albans Technical Institute to productive use the following year.(117) The strikingly different biases which

developed in these two schools reveals the different local gaps they filled, and also the LEA's lack of pre-ordained purpose for these institutions beyond a vague promotion of advanced elementary education.

If the LEA initially failed to appreciate Watford Central School's niche, HMI did not and neither did the general public. Significantly, the Board accepted the inauspicious surroundings of the redesignated school primarily because it possessed adequate space for Handicraft and Domestic Science.(118) To a large extent it judged the success of the school on two pragmatic criteria - the number of pupils staying for four or more years, and the quality of jobs secured by leavers. In 1922 HMI was gratified to note that there was regard "in the later years to the respective needs of commercial and industrial occupations."(119) That same year the LEA lowered the age of admission from 12+ to 11+, in immediate response to HMI's arguments that if a fifth year became customary far more pupils would secure rewarding commercial and industrial appointments, rather than mere clerkships, and there would be additional candidates for the pupil-teacher centres.(120) By 1925 nearly all pupils completed a four year course, and half entered a fifth year. In addition, the pupil-teacher centre prospered, and maintained a high pass rate in the qualifying examinations. To some extent the school became the victim of its own success. In 1925 HMI acknowledged it was hard to avoid overloading staff and pupils, as the school

"not only provides alternative curricula, Industrial and Commercial, but must also keep in view the requirements of the Cambridge Local Examinations, candidates for which are not selected till about the age of 15."(121)

Nevertheless, HMI firmly cautioned the headmaster against any "check" on the "special characteristics of a Central School" - that is, its thorough preparation of pupils for industrial and commercial careers.(122)

The St. Albans Girls' Central School developed differently, largely because it was expected to offset the comparative lack of secondary education for girls in the city. HMI reports in 1923 and 1926 reveal a school reaching way beyond the ordinary elementary range of subjects and standard of attainment, but at the price of devoting far less attention than its counterpart in Watford to vocational courses. This combination of local pressures and school inclinations were unacceptable to HMI who attempted, vainly in the event, to introduce more Practical Instruction. In 1923 they criticised "in a school of this type" the undeveloped nature of practical Needlework, Drawing and Handwork and the lack of continuous Housecraft training.(123) Three years later the bias still had not been revised.(124) The school had taken advantage of the LEA's lack of direction, transcended its dismal surroundings, and prospered through its own sensitivity to local pressures - three critical points it had in common with Watford.

The equivocal nature of this type of school - selective yet ad hoc and largely responding to local forces - was highlighted in the Part III Authority of Hemel Hempstead. The establishment of a central school was the borough's sole response to the higher education demands of the 1918 Education Act. The decision was far from unanimous among either borough education committee members or the public, some preferring a secondary school, some a senior elementary department, and many nothing.(125) A central school was a compromise satisfying several disparate groups - those wanting higher elementary education, those wanting a vocational bias, and those wanting secondary places to remain limited to a few scholarships in nearby Watford and Berkhamsted.(126) When in 1922 the population growth rendered action unavoidable by the borough council, the cheapest solution was sought, and a selective "higher top" started in an elementary school's spare rooms as the nucleus of a central school.(127) Nevertheless the council's

attitude only masked the rising demand for advanced courses. There was a rush of applicants to sit the selection examination, and from these inauspicious beginnings quickly grew another practically and vocationally orientated central school possessing a high local reputation.(128)

Once the spectre of a multitude of compulsory continuation schools and advanced elementary classes had faded in the cold light of the recession, both the county and Hemel education committees had made minimal concessions to the technical aspirations of elementary schoolchildren. In this respect, they had displayed consistency with their reluctance to expand secondary grammar schooling, but in several ways the similarities between technical and secondary education were soon to prove far less important than the differences. Firstly, the LEA never considered technical education socially exclusive. Secondly, technical education's range was capable of almost infinite expansion in line with industrial and commercial advances. Thirdly, elementary education was a most appropriate preparation for technical education, and much was being done to ensure its increasing appropriateness by highlighting Practical Instruction. Fourthly, technical education provision was determined primarily by continually evolving urban needs, far removed from the concept of a traditional liberal curriculum in great need of protection. The great difference was really the sum total of all these points - that unlike grammar school education, the LEA eventually realised there were sound reasons to encourage and expand technical education, and to see it mainly as interwoven with, and arising out of, elementary school courses.

(v)

"..AN AGE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHOOLS"

TECHNICAL EDUCATION: THE YEARS OF ACTIVE PROMOTION

1926-31

At the same time as the private initiatives and the central schools revealed the growing demand for advanced and higher elementary education, demographic forces were creating the obligation to clarify their place in the educational hierarchy. On the one hand there was rapid urban growth, a proliferation of new businesses, and the county council's undoubted predilection for a vocational bias in elementary schools. On the other hand there was the LEA's reluctance to finance facilities for elementary pupils over the age of fourteen, and a firm conviction that only a minority of elementary pupils had the capacity, inclination or home encouragement to benefit from advanced education of any sort.

By the early 1930s there was a clear recognition of the value of technical education by the LEA, an appreciation heightened by government statements and reports. Accompanying this, however, were two apparently contradictory developments. First the elementary schools were developing and intensifying a range of Handicraft courses. In the major towns they could lead to courses in the central schools from 11, evening schools from 13, and technical institutes from 15. Secondly, Commerce courses were started in secondary schools and the LEA introduced "modern" secondary schools with a technological and business

bias. The decisions nevertheless reflected the adaptation of old assumptions to new situations. Although technical education permeated both sectors of education, their attitudes towards it differed widely. Fundamentally technical education was a prize to be won by elementary pupils but a consolation for academic failure in secondary ones.

Developments in several major towns during the later 1920s showed that as technical education rose in the firmament a firm place was being found for it which recognised its significance while limiting its status. Although the nascent central school in Hemel Hempstead had been welcomed on arrival, a campaign seeing it as a mere stopgap for a secondary school prospered in direct proportion to national economic recovery.(129) In 1926 a reluctant borough council reached agreement with the county council, and three years later a new secondary grammar school opened.(130) Nevertheless the central school remained open, and full. It kept its bias, making it easier for the secondary school to do the same. In 1929 the central school headmaster made the position crystal clear, proudly proclaiming his fulfilment of

"the demand ... for instruction of a practical nature, it being recognised that better results were produced by actually doing a thing than by bookish instruction."(131)

When Bloom discussed reorganisation with the borough in 1929, he envisaged a wide range of interests and abilities being met through a neat hierarchy of grammar, central and senior schools, the first two selective.(132)

It was much the same in St.Albans. The girls' central school was very popular, but its lowly origins and vocational associations denied it secondary status as the city expanded. During the reorganisation discussions of 1927, the city's education sub-committee considered the

school filled the gap between the elementary and grammar schools perfectly.(133) The headmistress of the High School agreed, arguing that the early leaving of 58% of her free-place pupils proved the LEA's generosity in this direction was already excessive.(134) Not surprisingly the LEA accepted this as confirmation that the city's balance between education and vocational training was about right, and that the central school should be rehoused more spaciouly, but not redesignated. (135)

The quickening pace of urban growth in Hertfordshire in the later 1920s obliged the rationalisation of practical and technical facilities alongside Hadow reorganisation. There was undoubtedly great local interest in technical education. Contrary to the ATI's criticisms of the general disinterest in the subject shown by parents and employers, and TES accusations that

"the terms "technical" and "vocational" have become almost terms of abuse with some writers on education, and the education so defined is by them considered to be of small worth",

public meetings and HCTA conferences in Hertfordshire kept coming back to the issues, trying to determine the best way forward.(136) Far from denigrating either technical or vocational education, speakers sought to elevate both - although for widely differing reasons. Hertfordshire headteachers and newspaper editors urged greater efforts to identify children's aptitudes and to "broaden the avenues of opportunity."(137) The Garden Cities, especially, kept these ideals alive, continually bemoaning the lack of secondary schools with both grammar and technical sides.(138) Others welcomed the trend towards vocationalism because their aspirations for elementary schoolchildren were severely limited, and because they believed national efficiency in times of economic crisis demanded a more obviously cost-effective system of elementary education.(139) The prime example was Rear Admiral Sueter, Conservative MP for Hertford, who openly

welcomed the early identification and fostering of vocational interests and abilities on the assumption it would not only pave the way for more relatively cheaply trained artisans, but also prove the inappropriateness of an expensive grammar school education for most working class pupils.(140)

For a mix of social, political and economic reasons, the times were increasingly favourably disposed towards technical education, and, as distinct educational pathways were clarified and signposted, the implications for elementary schools were considerable. Watford took an aggressive lead in these developments, promoting a variety of vocational courses. Unabashed by the repressive post-war actions of the county education committee, the borough was largely responsible for forcing the LEA to react more sympathetically to urban demands. The turning point was the borough's major victory over the LEA in a much publicised confrontation over the level of grants. The borough claimed not only the new penny rate allowed by the county council to rapidly expanding area, but also the highly favourable "special agreement" grant negotiated with the LEA before the war when the Part III status was relinquished.(141) The county had allowed the borough only the greater of the two "extras" - its special agreement grant. In April 1921 the LEA, clearly surprised and alarmed at the ferocity of the campaign, conceded the point, and with it the educational initiative.(142) Henceforth the LEA much preferred conciliation to confrontation with this truculent, progressive, well-represented and financially favoured borough.

In furtherance of its own cause, Watford became the pacemaker for the county. It established a Higher Education Propaganda Committee, which straightway introduced several secondary and public school features into technical

education.(143) In 1922 prizes had been introduced at the School of Art, Science and Commerce, and the Countess of Clarendon had accepted the invitation to distribute them. (144) A sympathetic local press highlighted the good posts and business commissions gained by students, and the award ceremony became an annual showpiece.(145) A new illustrated prospectus publicised the range of courses closely related to local commerce and industries.(146) In 1926 HMI noted with approval that the School's work was tightly coordinated with the borough's four evening continuation schools, all of which took students at 14, mainly direct from elementary schools.(147) Between 1922 and 1926 the School's intake virtually doubled to 393.(148) Of these, 256 had previously attended elementary or central schools, and 120 had a secondary school background.(149) This wide range of students indicates the growing prestige of the School, and its ability to formulate a diversified programme relevant to local employment needs.

Technical and commercial education were rising in popularity and status, with an appeal clearly straddling both major sectors of education.(150) But, as the majority of students' backgrounds and the emphasis on the post-14 continuation links clearly implied, the courses were perceived as particularly relevant to the elementary school leavers with their greater Handicraft experience and general practical bent. A broad, continuous and increasingly well-trodden pathway, had been opened up by HMI, county and borough councillors, teachers and subject organisers. It began early in the elementary school and led straight to enrolment at the School of Art, Commerce and Science. There is evidence of the LEA's belated appreciation of the central school's role in this respect in HMI's comment in 1929 on the "generous" staffing.(151) The school had found its worthy if not elevated niche, providing a curriculum which started broad and general but gradually targeted most pupils towards commercial and industrial courses.(152)

Self-promotion characterised other towns, and a range of institutions. For example, in 1924 the Letchworth Handicraft Centre instituted its first public exhibition of work by the older elementary boys, the press report commenting approvingly that

"it must also be of special value in a town like Letchworth, where so many boys take up industrial and scientific work."(153)

The same year, St.Albans School of Industrial Art publicised its activities through a public display of pupils' work, and in 1925 Alderman Graveson began to promote meetings in Hertford between evening continuation class teachers and elementary school families to encourage practical and vocational training.(154)

Another sign of the desire to promote technical education among elementary schoolchildren was the county education committee's reduction of the official age of entry to evening classes from 14 to 13 in 1926.(155) This apparently innocuous concession had several important implications. It formalised the long-standing practice of allowing full-time elementary schoolchildren to attend evening classes, but now they became eligible to count towards the minimum number required for the courses to run. (156) It was also a recognition by the LEA of two important points - that elementary education should not finish at 14, and that it was a particularly appropriate foundation for this type of extended practical training. The avowed aim was to increase children's interest in the mainly commercially and industrially orientated courses, and the policy was pursued with vigour. Advertising leaflets and the county's revised handbook emphasised the "Preparatory" courses specially devised for those under 14, and partly as a result of the new and official youthful recruitment the number of successful evening courses rose from 255 in 1921-22 to 335 in 1927-28, and then 402 in 1928-29.(157)

Ironically, in 1925 the Board took stock of technical education throughout the country, and although it commended the "often quite good" and "sometimes excellent" teaching HMI had witnessed in the evening continuation classes, it rejected these as the main approach for the future because of the high wastage rate.(158) Instead, the Board envisaged an educational system whereby an increasing number of pupils passed through secondary school, central school or junior technical school until sixteen, and then undertook senior or advanced part-time courses to complement employment.(159) The repercussions were considerable. As one senior civil servant minuted, the interests of national recovery, the career prospects of pupils, the existing initiatives in the field, and the high potential costs, had all contributed

"to the realisation that a proper expansion of higher education cannot be secured by a multiplication of secondary schools of the Grammar School type."(160)

Hertfordshire was in line with Board thinking. Certainly expanding the grammar schools was the last thing the LEA wanted. The evening schools and continuation classes had received a significant boost, and by the later 1920s the central schools at Hemel Hempstead, Watford and St.Albans - and a fourth later established by the Anglican church in Ware - were flourishing, as were the five "advanced tops" and Dickinson's Day Continuation School. Perhaps most significantly of all, the LEA's antipathy towards publicly funded local initiatives had been replaced by encouragement.

The LEA continued wrestling with the problems of actively promoting technical education and coordinating its relationship with other areas of education. In 1928 Howe presented the education committee with ideas gleaned from neighbouring counties, and highlighted Hertfordshire's neglect of Junior Technical Schools. Buckinghamshire had two of them, and Essex three, Surrey four and Kent five, and Middlesex had six Trades Schools. All were flourishing,

and demand was high.(161) As a result, the LEA undertook two linked initiatives. The first secured grants for Hertfordshire pupils over thirteen to attend full-time or part-time at London and Middlesex Technical Institutes and Junior Technical and Trades Schools "for instruction in subjects not available within the county".(162) Demand soared, from 229 part-time and 21 full-time students in 1927-28, to 721 and 51 respectively in 1930-31.(163)

The second initiative was the establishment of a Junior Technical School in Watford - a facility desired by that borough since the Armistice. It opened in 1929, in typically makeshift fashion, in the old public library. The annual intake was 120 pupils rising fourteen years of age. They took two or three year full-time courses specialising in Industrial Art or Commerce, but interspersed with general educational studies. Fees were charged, but 25% of places were free for suitably qualified and approved candidates.(164) Any public animosity between borough and county had faded, and the establishment and rapid expansion of this instantly over-subscribed school were unclouded by disagreements. Fundamentally Watford now got whatever it wanted as the LEA relied upon the borough to identify its own needs. In the same year, 1929, the county and borough authorities cooperated in expanding the School of Science's land, buildings and equipment, and in 1930 all Watford's technical education sites and courses were deemed components of a newly designated "Technical School" in an attempt to unify the disparate parts conceptually and administratively. (165) In 1931 Lord Eustace Percy opened the new annexe of the newly created School during a week-long series of demonstrations, displays by local firms, and guided tours for elementary school pupils.(166) County education committee members and officers involved themselves fully in the public celebrations - and, in a sure indication of its support, the LEA bore the underestimated costs without complaint.(167)

Another sign of the growing demand for vocational tuition, and the growing willingness to satisfy it, was the trend for courses in Commerce to permeate both elementary and secondary schools. The varying reaction of schools to their inclusion in the curriculum was instrumental in putting technical education firmly in its place as something to which elementary children rose and secondary pupils dropped. In 1928 elementary school managers began to apply to the county council for typewriters for business and secretarial courses. The response by Bloom and Howe was important as it signalled their recognition that the shading-off of general education and the introduction of vocational training frequently occurred before the age of 14. They banned the teaching of specific office techniques in ordinary elementary classes, permitted it in "advanced tops" provided it was taught alongside the general principles of Commerce, and positively welcomed it in evening continuation classes.(168) To some extent, therefore, such instruction was a privilege earned by the satisfactory completion of a general elementary education.

It was very different in the secondary sector. In 1928 Watford Boys' Grammar School applied for a Commerce teacher "to meet a big demand on the part of parents for such subjects to assist their sons to obtain business appointments."(169)

Governors, HMI and education committee members agreed Commerce would be taken mainly by those unlikely to reach the School Certificate Examination standard of attainment. The new vocationally orientated subject was on a par with Woodwork and Art, the only two subjects pupils would be allowed to abandon to take it up.(170) Although the presence of Commerce was the result of parental pressure, it was deemed a second-rate subject for second-rate students. All parties concerned with the decision had no doubts on two counts - first, the course would justify its existence by fulfilling its vocational purpose and, second, there could be no justification other than a job for undertaking it.

The growth in technical education was not universally welcomed by elementary schools either. At a time when elementary education seemed to be lifting itself out of a narrowly utilitarian mould, there was a wariness of technical education's invasive and potentially tainting properties. It seemed to have Janus-like qualities. It could be seen as forward looking, serving all aspects of the economy, and capable of launching and fostering good careers for a wide range of pupils, but it was equally capable of association with outmoded, restricted, parsimonious and hierarchical views of education. County teachers were prone to these latter suspicions, as two very different incidents reveal. They also reveal the extent to which industries and businesses felt elementary schools were becoming their training ground. At a county conference in 1927, Sir Ernest Gray, until recently General Secretary of the NUT, led the critical response to the Selfridge's speaker who blandly assumed

"this might well be termed an age of industrial development in the schools."(171)

Gray used the occasion to highlight and then mock the overwhelming demands for agricultural, commercial and industrial education in elementary schools.(172)

Similar criticisms of the multitude of vocational demands, made without regard to their implications for a balanced curriculum, were voiced by Hemel Hempstead teachers in 1928. The occasion was their rejection of Dickinson's scheme for regular monthly visits by pupils to the mills for a course of lectures, demonstrations and set tasks.(173) What the mills publicised as a wholesome experience of a major company at work, and HMI saw as a laudable exercise in cohesion between education and industry, and the borough education committee saw as a valuable introduction to the pupils' likely employer, the teachers condemned as excessively restricted vocational training, calculated to dominate the curriculum at the time of the visits, and entirely inappropriate for children under 14.(174)

There was just one serious attempt to give Technical Education parity of status and facilities with secondary education. Characteristically, it came from Letchworth which in 1925 deemed the time ripe to revive the idea of a Civic College, a concept first mooted in 1919 as a solution to the misunderstanding its proponents felt existed between the sectors of education, between education and industry, and between schools and parents.(175) The Civic College committee sought a mutually advantageous and amicable working partnership with the LEA, which would benefit the town educationally and the county council financially. The First Garden City Company donated a substantial grant and a prime site on which the county council was asked to build a secondary school, and the local council a library, gymnasium, and clubrooms.(176) The College aimed to promote, grant-aid and coordinate the activities of the town's elementary schools, and provide specialist facilities for the advanced classes.(177) The existing schools would be reorganised into junior and senior schools, with one of them refurbished by the College as a Central School for bright pupils with marked practical abilities.(178) A Technical School, equal in status with the secondary school, was a medium term objective.(179) Technical Education would have a high profile, dominating a new Junior Technical School and the part-time Day Continuation School and Evening Continuation Classes.(180) The various educational facilities would cater for all children up to the age of seventeen, and the committee aimed at nothing less than parity of educational facilities and esteem for every type of post-primary course. For young children there would be numerous workshops where they could acquire skills, solve problems, and work creatively. For older pupils farms, workshops, libraries, laboratories and studios would play key and equal roles in their education and training.(181)

The Civic College committee had the support of local industrialists, trades unions, school managers and the

Parents' Educational Association. Beyond the town it enjoyed the active assistance of several university and polytechnic directors and principals, and Sir Douglas Hogg, the Attorney-General, agreed to be its president. It was certainly warmly supported by the county council and HMI Bloom.(182) In January 1927, without argument, the county council voted £40,000 for the secondary school, and already the public appeal had added £3,000 to the £6,000 granted by the Garden City Company for associated developments.(183)

The town had got its secondary school, but suddenly little more is heard of the Civic College as a building, a concept or a coordinating committee. In October 1927 the county education committee discussed the plans again, and a cryptic sentence in the press report reads

"The matter was submitted to the Board of Education and considerable correspondence resulted between the Board, the Education Office, and representatives from Letchworth with regard to the proposals for the full scheme relative to the Civic College."(184)

The Public Record Office, County Record Office and First Garden City Museum contain none of this correspondence, nor any minutes or memoranda about it, nor was it discussed by the Press. A few months later, however, a county education committee report was very careful to keep the new Letchworth secondary school distinct from the Civic College.(185) In 1928, the College committee gave £1,000 towards specialist equipment in the town's higher top class, but before accepting the gift the LEA felt obliged to remind the donors they could not establish any rights over the town's existing, redesignated or future schools through such generosity.(186) The College is not mentioned at all during the major discussions on educational reorganisation in Letchworth which took place between 1929 and 1931, or thereafter.(187)

These few clues indicate the Board refused to cooperate with the Committee, and cautioned the LEA to do likewise.

Fundamentally the partnership envisaged by the committee was a Quixotic dream. Individually, committee members could be elected to local councils and managing bodies, but the committee itself could only exercise authority over an educational institution through the establishment of a non-provided school, and this was clearly not its intention. In addition, for all the approval expressed by Morris and other county councillors for such local self-help and determination, it must be doubted whether the LEA really desired much more than the free land and part of the Garden City's grant for the schools it had to build in Letchworth. Although, possibly, Letchworth's new grammar school was built sooner rather than later, the majority of county councillors and education committee members were unlikely to be inspired by the local vision of parity of esteem and expenditure between all forms of post-primary education. However, the positive legacy of the campaign for the College seems to have been the LEA's speedy inauguration of discussions about reorganisation. During this process, the local council, churches and committees were regularly consulted, but any ideas of technical education as the fulcrum of education, which held the whole system and process in balance, had been held very much at bay.

It was Watford, not Letchworth, which was in tune with the times. A plethora of national inquiries in the later 1920s, and direct action by the Board, proves the point. The Board was evolving an increasingly firm and centralised policy regarding technical education and its place in the firmament. Its annual report of 1928 intimated that local developments were likely to be supplemented by central initiatives in future. First, it acknowledged the growing national appreciation of "the practical importance of education for industry and commerce." Second, it stated both employers and workers were increasingly aware of education's contribution "to industrial and commercial efficiency." Third, it asserted LEAs and teachers were

keen for the business world to state their needs "with precision and authority" so that education could respond effectively. Finally, as a result of analysing these forces, it announced numerous Board initiatives to satisfy all parties.(188) The Board had much evidence to substantiate its claims and justify its policy. The second part of the Malcolm Committee's Report, Education and Industry, had appeared in June 1928. The educational press criticised its generally uncritical attitude towards current provision and developments, but it strengthened the government's hand by urging it to find out what technical education was needed by industry and then negotiate with LEAs to provide it.(189) The Report saw the elementary school as a well-directed preparatory training ground for skilled labour. Although it eschewed specialised vocational training in ordinary elementary schools, it deemed it appropriate for older pupils in central schools and for all pupils in Junior Technical Schools. A major point was its conviction that full-time technical education courses at all levels should be expanded, but "with due regard to the factors of supply and demand."(190)

The Malcolm Report complemented the views of other inquiries. In 1927 the Ministry of Labour's Departmental Committee on Industry and Trade believed firms should survey local technical education facilities, identify the gaps, and work with LEAs, colleges and schools to fill them.(191) Lord Emmott's committee, investigating "the relationship of technical education to other forms of education and to industry and commerce", agreed that

"industry requires technical education varying in nature and importance according to the trade concerned,"

and, like the Malcolm Report, urged a firm lead from government.(192) Percy used arguments from all these surveys, and from the 1926 Hadow Report, to justify and promulgate a technical education policy which fitted into the Board's general reorganisation programme. (193)

The implications for elementary schools and their pupils were enormous. In Pamphlet No64, issued in 1929, Percy first redefined technical education as 'Education for Industry and Commerce', and then spent twenty-six pages carefully grading and matching post-primary courses in this field with post-primary schools.(194) He noted a few ex-secondary school pupils entered industry and commerce with degrees. Some left secondary schools at 16, and combined work with courses in technical or day continuation schools, where they were joined by students from selective central schools. More left non-selective central and senior schools at 14 or 15 to enter junior technical schools or continuation classes, sometimes later proceeding to senior courses.(195) With little hard evidence, Percy made much of the elementary schools' inadequate preparation of pupils for technical education to justify his new policy whereby central and senior elementary schools would provide

"improved courses of general education on the basis of which the work of the continuation classes and the technical institution can be more effectively developed and, with this object, the curriculum of these schools is designed, among other things, to give to all children, not on vocational, but on general educational grounds, the kind of preliminary manual training which is the basis of all crafts."(196)

He hoped the gradual voluntary extension of full-time schooling, with the continuation classes and junior technical schools forming a short bridge to senior technical institutions, would negate the need to raise the leaving age.(197) His policy maintained the distinction between secondary and elementary education. Although education for industry and commerce straddled both sectors, the elementary schools of all hues were far more consciously to prepare pupils for industrial and commercial training and employment. Such activities were to be very much a sideline in secondary schools.

The utilitarian worth of technical education and all vocational courses was fully appreciated by Hertfordshire

county councillors and education committee members. Even during the worst years of the depression, 1931-32, when a few new Practical Instruction centres were postponed and the secondary school orientated College of Housecraft cancelled, no threats were made to the existing provision for children.

(198) In October 1931 the chairman of the education committee, William Graveson, reported to members that in the light of the increasing popularity of courses, the commendations by HMI, the general unemployment,

"and the necessity for young persons to equip themselves in the best manner possible for obtaining situations, it would appear inadvisable to reduce the existing facilities."(199)

In December 1932 the Special Expenditure Committee omitted technical education altogether from its wide-ranging strictures.(200)

(vi)

**"..PEOPLE SO EMPLOYED NATURALLY LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR SONS
AND DAUGHTERS FOLLOWING THE SAME BLACK-COATED VOCATION."**

**THE METAMORPHOSIS OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
AND ITS EFFECT UPON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
1931-39**

Throughout the Depression of the early 1930s the worth of technical education was rarely questioned. Indeed these years were conducive not only to its survival but also to its enhancement. Well-targeted vocational education was seen as affording a possible long-term solution to economic anxieties nationally, and also a shorter-term counter to individual families' fears of unemployment. Certainly this was the evidence emanating from Hertfordshire, and it applied to all courses and schools.

The evolution of the Technical School in the rapidly growing borough of Barnet encapsulates the way the soaring demand for vocationally biased technical education was both welcomed and channelled. Many factors conducive to the establishment of such an institution were present - widespread local support, a determined campaign leader, and growing county council sympathy. In 1929 the chief education officer, Howe, showed his support for technical education by intimating to H.E.Fern, the local county councillor and chairman of the county's Practical Instruction Sub-Committee, that the imminent reorganisation of the borough's schools would be an propitious time to

marshal local support for technical education.(201) Fern spent the next five years vigorously promoting the subject, leading discussions between local industrialists, headteachers, governors and managers, directing local pressure on the county council for improved facilities, and securing technical education's place in the borough's reorganised schools. From 1930 Barnet Handicraft Centre began its transformation into a multi-faceted Technical School, first by planning a wider range of senior elementary courses, and then by expanding into the rambling building vacated by the Grammar School when its new premises were built.(202)

The main need in the 1930s, argued Fern and fellow borough councillors, was for a clearly identified range and sequence of vocational courses suiting local employers.(203) Fern saw the aspiring Technical School filling a significant educational gap between the grammar and senior elementary schools in commercially and industrially orientated Barnet. In addition to the symbolism of its base in the old Grammar School, the Technical School undoubtedly knew its place hierarchically as well as educationally, which was to consider practical subjects recommended to it by others. It is not surprising Barnet's Grammar Schools wholeheartedly encouraged the Technical School's expansion, as it could be used to free them from undue contact with commerce and industry. The Boys' Grammar School, for example, urged the Technical School to introduce applied bio-chemistry and civil engineering.(204) By some, the tension wrought by such arrangements was keenly felt. In 1933 the Grammar Schools' mixed motives, and especially their assumptions of superiority, provoked militant local councillors to hurl at them, publicly, the accusations that they were financially pampered and vocationally useless.(205) By then, however, the arrangements masterminded by Fern were virtually in place. Like the majority of people in Barnet, Fern favoured a complete range of post-eleven schools, and,

provided that range was available, he found the social hierarchy within it unremarkable.

In 1933 the county's problems in maintaining pace with residential growth, in promoting technical education, in reducing the rate of grammar school expansion, and in keeping costs down in general, seemed to be eased in one stroke by the introduction of the "modern" secondary school. Howe argued that too many children were attending grammar schools, both as fee-payers and free-placers, and suggested that 50% of their pupils would benefit far more from "parallel" or "modern" secondary schools, "arranged in co-operation with the requirements of industry and commerce in the areas served by the scholar." (206) The previous year local grammar school headteachers themselves had called for tighter controls upon elementary pupils' access to their schools - the occasion one bluntly had asserted that 40% of the free-placers "were not worth spending money upon." (207) The "modern" secondary school sounded progressive, it certainly increased children's options, it had strong vocational overtones, and it served national interests - and in due course the LEA was to bask in praise for achieving all those goals. Yet, while it broadened the definition of secondary education, it did nothing to improve the overall ratio of secondary places to the child population, but as Howe had clearly indicated, this was not the intention.

From the LEA's point of view the new policy had the advantage of being introduced at a time when existing local secondary schools were being modernised and expanded, and new areas were demanding them. In a period of recession, the prospect of the "modern" secondary school proved particularly attractive on both educational and economic grounds to the Board, the LEA and ratepayers. After a conventional secondary course between 11+ and 13+, the pupils would choose either to continue that conventional

course or to pursue a commercial and industrial course up to an "Approved First Examination" at 16+.(208) The new schools would be cheaper to erect and run, as at 16+ pupils opted to enter employment, transfer to a grammar school for the Higher Certificate, or stay on for a one year course in business studies.(209) In 1934 the education committee agreed they would be eminently suitable for Cheshunt and East Barnet, both predominantly commercial and light industrial in occupation, and vociferous in their demands for secondary schools.(210) Indeed the LEA and the Board hinted to the local councils it was a "modern" secondary school they would get, or probably nothing.(211)

The press welcomed the schools for filling a gap in the educational hierarchy, and thereby making a major contribution to matching pupils accurately to careers and, with less prescience, it saw them breaking down the social snobbery attached to particular types of education and occupations.(212) St.Albans, now more an industrial and dormitory town than ancient cathedral city, exemplifies those points. Here a new "modern" secondary school for boys was planned to complement both the existing boys' grammar school and a new boys' senior elementary school. The grammar school headmaster welcomed the variety and perceived no rival, and the city council praised the wide-ranging opportunities soon to be available to diligent elementary schoolchildren.(213) It was the same double-edged response which greeted the evolving Technical School in Barnet. It occurred elsewhere, too. In 1932 the headmaster of Watford Grammar School applauded the increasing ability of his borough's Technical School to cater for pupils of a wide range of ages leaving elementary, central and secondary schools.(214) Nevertheless, his speech left no doubts that while technical education might be the accolade for an aspiring elementary pupil, it was more likely to be only a consolation prize for a secondary one.

Despite such manifestations of educational snobbery, the increasing range and availability of technical courses were clearly attractive to many Hertfordshire elementary school pupils. Certainly great efforts were made to encourage elementary pupils to undertake such activities, and much ordinary elementary classwork was seen as a preparation for them. In the aftermath of the depression the vocational implications became more openly acceptable. With the first half of the 1930s filled with anxiety regarding unemployment, HMI's criteria of success in senior elementary schools firmly included the quality of the jobs or training courses pupils gained on completing their education. A striking example was the large and well-regarded elementary school in Hatfield. Throughout the 1930s HMI noted most leavers had no problem in securing office employment or manual jobs in firms associated with the local aeronautical industry. In 1931, and again in 1936, particular note was made of the instruction given in typing and shorthand outside school hours to the "A" stream, the strong practical bias characterising "B" stream work, and the untiring efforts of the headmaster to match pupils' abilities to occupations or further training, or both.(215)

The same criterion was applied to the central schools. In Watford in 1934 HMI was impressed that since 1931 11% of boys and 12% of girls had entered teaching, 72% and 65% respectively had embarked upon clerical careers, which left just 17% and 23% accepting manual posts.(216) The implication of HMI's hierarchy is that the top two categories, representing 83% of boys and 77% of girls, meant the school was fulfilling its selective vocational and commercial function well. Handicraft and Housecraft were specialist subjects from the age of entry at 11, with commercial subjects such as shorthand, typing and book-keeping being introduced at 13+.(217) With its carefully circumscribed objectives, and the lavish praise bestowed upon it for achieving them, it was undoubtedly a superior

elementary school - but little more. In contrast, by the mid-1930s the secondary aspirations of the girls' central school in St. Albans led to its condemnation as an anachronism by HMI, LEA and city council, despite its brand-new premises.(218) It had rejected Commerce, given only passing attention to Housecraft, and its "B" stream - half the school - were especially ill-served.(219) As a result plans were made to build a new senior school, and to close the central school whose premises would be used to expand the girls' grammar school and whose children would be divided equally between the grammar and senior elementary schools according to academic or practical ability.(220)

HMI were also at pains in 1934 to assess Watford's Junior Art, Commercial and Technical Schools in the context of the district's major occupational categories. This involved judgements which had important ramifications for elementary school children. The headmaster of the Junior Art School was commended for his links with employers, and HMI were gratified that 33 of the 48 leavers between 1931 and 1933 had entered skilled trades, but they were convinced the percentage would be higher if the age of entry to the school was lowered from 14 to 13 to ensure students completed the two year course nearer 15 than 16.(221) Similar situations existed at the Junior Commercial and Technical Schools.(222) As a result HMI argued strongly that Watford merited far more extensive technical education facilities - and certainly the LEA had no hesitation in agreeing to the earlier age of entry, which operated from September 1935.(223)

HMI persisted with the systematising of technical education throughout south-west Hertfordshire. Another survey in 1934 - of Watford, Bushey and Rickmansworth - emphasised the major role technical education should have within the overall provision of post-primary education in this

conurbation containing over 100,000 people.(224) HMI was convinced both local circumstances and opinion demanded it. First, many Hertfordshire families regarded "life in some business house in the City as their normal occupation" and "rightly or wrongly people so employed naturally look forward to their sons and daughters following the same black-coated vocation; and they are faced with the problem of obtaining some form of post-primary education which will fit their children for such means of livelihood at the lowest possible cost."(225)

Second, the growing industrialisation of the district itself, and the influx of workers to serve it, necessitated concentration upon elementary and technical rather than grammar schools.(226) The report envisaged a much closer match between the vocational needs of the district and its system of schools. This in turn meant an intensification of commercial and practical subjects in ordinary elementary schools as well as the creation of more specialist technical institutions, and the fostering of a greater degree of integration between them.

This thorough investigation had stemmed from government policy. In 1933 the Board had announced a full-scale survey of all types of Junior Technical Schools, but the prolonged and detailed inquiry ranged over all aspects of technical and vocational education in all types of schools and industries.(227) Certainly the heightened attention given to technical education was thought worthy of firm inclusion in the Conservative Party's election manifesto late in 1935.(228) Soon afterwards, in January 1936, Circular 1444 gave notice of positive government support, direction and, indeed, control of future developments.(229) It asserted technical education "in many areas" was "still handicapped by inadequate, unsuitable or scattered premises, while in others there is urgent need for new provision." (230)

With government initiatives now fast outpacing the capacity of Hertfordshire to match them, the effect was immediate and immense. Indeed, for over two years the initiative passed completely from the LEA. In December 1935 yet another HMI report on technical education in the county was published.(231) This time all urban districts were covered, and the new radical proposals became the standard against which everything was judged. It is not surprising, therefore, that harsh and unprecedented criticisms were made of Hertfordshire's attitudes, courses and premises. Certain principals of technical and evening institutes were commended for their close contacts with both elementary schools and employers, and for their large proportion of students under 16 years of age.(232) Nevertheless, to HMI these highlights only accentuated the haphazard approach of the LEA in general, especially its lack of distinction between junior and senior courses, and its apparent lack of effort to attract children at 13 or 14.(233) The numerous cramped buildings throughout the county were castigated, with St.Albans epitomising all that was inadequate regarding technical education in Hertfordshire.(234) The city's schools and institutes had established few links with industry and commerce, there was no liaison between elementary and technical institutions, there were no preliminary technical or commercial courses for those under 16, there were junior technical courses running without apparatus or workshops, and, as a result, the Technical School only had 370 on roll from a city of 30,000 people and a region containing an estimated 100,000.(235)

As a result, the county was urged to adopt an intensive and expensive policy of active encouragement of all aspects of technical education, with HMI supplying both the rationale and the detailed building programme. The report had noted the increasing density of population throughout the south and south-west, in St.Albans, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City in mid-Herts, and in Letchworth and Hitchin in the

north, and the plethora of modern manufacturing industries which dominated urban employment.(236) Based upon these factors, it laid down a future pattern of five regions within the county, each of which would possess a purpose-built Technical School. These were:-

1. South West - Watford, Bushey, Rickmansworth and Hemel Hempstead
2. South - Barnet and East Barnet
3. South East - Hertford, Ware, Hoddesdon and Cheshunt
4. Mid - St.Albans, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Harpenden
5. North - Letchworth, Hitchin and Baldock.

Experience elsewhere, in neighbouring Essex and Middlesex for example, said HMI,

"shows that the provision of a well-equipped Technical School, with its air of dignity and its social amenities, attracts students from unexpected quarters and in unexpected numbers."(237)

Fundamentally everything associated with technical education - its buildings, its courses and its charges - were to be made far more alluring, and for the first time Hertfordshire was to plan and build far ahead of demand, and not be merely reactive to it.

The criticisms of Hertfordshire had been detailed and forceful; the recommendations clear and urgent. It is equally clear, however, that to some extent the LEA had anticipated the tenor of the report. In the early months of 1935 the Handicraft organiser had tried to stimulate, with varying degrees of success, more local industries to send youthful employees to day and evening continuation classes.(238) Particularly apathetic local education sub-committees were directed to promote and maintain these links, and modest plans made to expand facilities in several towns.(239) Conferences in Watford between HMI, county and borough councillors, governors and managers, had led to

agreement that the post-primary reorganisation plans should be revised to incorporate new purpose-built technical and technically biased "modern" secondary schools as well as senior elementary ones.(240)

Nevertheless, the scale of expansion soared as technical education in Hertfordshire at all levels was reorganised and developed over the next four years much as the Board desired. The LEA was far from unwilling to tackle the task. In 1938 HMI noted "no apathy" in Hertfordshire, in marked contrast to the penny-pinching and wilful neglect discerned in Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Reading, Oxford and Southend.(241) Particular attention was paid to attracting children onto technical education courses at 13, and to providing a clear progression of studies up to 18.(242) The education committee was heartened by the Board's decision in 1935 to allow evening classes composed entirely of children aged under 14 to qualify for grant.(243) Fees were reduced, and the Special Places at Watford's Junior Technical and Commercial Schools were raised from 25% to 40%.(244)

As early as March 1936 the education committee first considered the question of the five Technical Schools. For a time the cautious committee tried to effect a medium-term compromise between immediate local needs and the Board's long-term ambitions. However, within this context - as in all others - the 1936 Education Act was crucial for Hertfordshire, and that year witnessed a dramatic turn in local attitudes and policy. With the school leaving age due to rise in 1939, with the Board's demands for detailed annual building programmes, and with the special grants for Technical Schools being available for only two years, the LEA saw the wisdom of drastic and hurried action.(245) As a direct consequence, in October 1936 Hertfordshire resolved to spend £80,000 on a new Technical School for Watford,

£26,500 on a similar but smaller school for mid-Herts in Welwyn Garden City, £36,000 on Hertford's new Evening Institute, £25,000 on extensions in Barnet, and £9,000 on improvements in Letchworth.(246)

Two years later even these sums seemed totally inadequate with the concept of Technical Education continually expanding. The preparation of plans in the light of the 1936 Act had raised several important issues regarding technical education courses - notably the age of entry, the provision for girls, and, once again, the degree to which local courses served local industries. As a result, the age of entry fell further, and technical courses finally became a post-primary option at 11 for elementary pupils much like secondary grammar school education. In 1937 Watford proposed a Junior Day Technical School providing a five year course for boys and girls from 11 to 16.(247) In a well-publicised experiment the Board had agreed to an admission age of 11 to the South-East Essex Technical College, and vigorous pressure from Watford and the LEA led the precedent to be extended to Hertfordshire in 1939.(248)

In July 1937 HMI castigated the paucity of vocational education for girls within the county, exempting only the wide-spread provision of Domestic Subjects.(249) HMI expected the five new schools to make "generous provision" for girls, with the LEA arranging preparatory classes in numerous other towns and mounting an extensive publicity campaign.(250) Despite the education committee's self-righteous retort that the supply of courses met the relatively desultory demand from girls, the requirement to promote technical education in areas of female employment other than home, hotel and cafe was immediately acknowledged, and local education sub-committees were instructed to plan appropriate commercially-orientated junior day and evening programmes.(251)

During 1938 and early 1939 the LEA regained the initiative. Despite rising building costs, four major new Technical Schools, and an Evening Institute, were planned. There was a clear recognition that educational and political opinion dictated major not minor developments in this field. Conferences throughout the five regions ensured that sites and specialist facilities were appropriate to industrial, commercial and agricultural needs. The solutions were indeed comprehensive. In mid and north Hertfordshire, for example, the new technical schools in Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth would have day and evening senior and advanced courses in Science and Technology, Engineering, Building, Commerce, Domestic Science, Arts and Crafts, and Language and Literature, with the preparatory and junior classes held in the existing evening institutes throughout the districts.(252) Both institutions were to have well-balanced management committees composed of county and local councillors, people experienced in education and representatives of local industries.(253) By the time the final plans were drafted, the costs for the new Schools had soared to £61,995 for Welwyn Garden City, £63,310 for Letchworth, £64,485 for Barnet, £137,954 in Watford, and £50,000 for the institute in Hertford. These exceeded the LEA's original costs by £35,495 in Welwyn, £53,710 in Letchworth, £39,485 in Barnet, £57,954 in Watford and £15,000 in Hertford.(254) The war brought to a halt the implementation of a well-considered, well-supported and well-funded county development plan. Work had started on Watford's new Technical School in the summer of 1939, and tenders had been invited for Barnet and Letchworth.(255)

CONCLUSION

In 1918 the county council had seen elementary education continuing at its 1914 standard of provision, with additional practical instruction dominating the later stages

of schooling, particularly the new extra year. Councillors envisaged a few elementary pupils entering secondary grammar schools, a few others furthering their practical training after fourteen, but most acquiring all the skills of which they were capable during the compulsory Handicraft and Domestic Subjects lessons prior to leaving school at 14. In these ways elementary schools served their purpose admirably - they identified the minority they could elevate out of it, and they emphasised the practical skills deemed necessary for the majority who stayed in it. The LEA placed its money where its interests were, and despite the recurring financial anxieties rarely showed any hesitation in investing in a broadening range of Handicraft and Domestic Subjects.

The years 1925 to 1931 witnessed the major turning point, when the LEA accepted that the demand for vocationally orientated technical education had to be satisfied whether the pupils were over 14 or under. The recurring economic uncertainties made clearly targeted vocational education popular with parents and employers, and events proved that the growth of population, industry and commerce had created the will in many expanding towns to fight hard for a full range of facilities. The towns certainly did not spurn grammar schools for their academic elite, but "higher tops", central schools, technical schools and "modern" secondary schools were equally in demand educationally if not equally regarded socially.

The difference between 1918 and 1939 regarding practical and technical education was great, but it was largely one of intensity rather than purpose - the growing amount of compulsory school time devoted to practical instruction, the vastly increased range of Handicraft, Domestic Subjects, technical and commercial courses, the creation of a far smoother progression of courses from 11+ to 16 and over, the

genuine efforts made to attract children to this type of education, and the gradual lowering of the age of entry to obviously vocational courses.

These threads in compulsory and voluntary schooling were, of course, only part of the educational fabric. The decision to create a general primary and post-primary divide, with 11+ as the age of transfer, expedited the clarification and development of three phases in practical instruction and technical education. First, there was the primary stage with practical activities serving as both a subject and a medium through which other subjects are explored. This preliminary inculcation of skills led on to the post-primary Handicraft and Domestic Subject programmes, with their increasing vocational emphasis. At various ages after 11 selected children were offered places on specialist courses in central schools, and, later, the Junior Technical Schools and the "modern" secondary schools, with the expectation that their full-time education would continue after 14. All these courses in their turn led on to voluntary advanced day and evening courses. By the mid-1930s, these various pathways were actively promoted, and undoubtedly popular.

In an age of economic uncertainty, the grammar schools felt obliged to accommodate such plebian pursuits as Commerce, but made no secret that they felt tainted rather than honoured by the contact. Such biases were considered primarily the preserve of the elementary school, as the type of socially inferior occupations for which these biases prepared children were those considered appropriate for the socially inferior families using such schools. Small wonder the grammar schools welcomed the proliferation of technically orientated institutions as the means to preserve their own identity and exclusivity.

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234. Ibid., pp7-13 & 15.
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244. Ibid., pp76-80 & 85-91.
245. HRO HCC2/155 CP134 HEC 2:10:36 pp13-22.
246. Ibid., pp17, 20-22 & 85-89.
247. HRO HCC2/157 CP50 HEC 9:4:37 pp96-101.
248. Ibid., p99; HCC HEd3 7/1 CEO Ann Rep 31:3:39 pp16-17; LU TES 19:3:38 p97.
249. PRO ED51/181 General Report of HMI on the Provision for Further Education for Women & Girls in the Administrative County of Hertfordshire for the period ending 31st July 1937.

250. Ibid.

251. HRO HCC2/160 CP205 HEC 17:1:38 pp82-84.

252. HRO HCC2/161 CP28 HEC 8:4:38 pp76-83; HEd3 7/1 CEO Ann Rep 31:3:38 p24.

253. HRO HCC2/161 CP28 HEC 8:4:38 pp76-83.

254. HRO HCC2/163 CP134 HEC 7:10:38 pp56-57; HCC2/164 CP186 HEC 16:1:39 pp86-87; HCC2/165 CP25 HEC 31:3:39 pp51-52; HCC2/167 CP131 HEC 19:6:39 pp156-157; BL Herts Mercury 6:11:36 p12 cols3-5, 8:10:37 p7 cols1-4.

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CHAPTER FIVE

REFORM, RETRENCHMENT & REORGANISATION

1918 - 1935

(i)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the effect of immigration, county policies, local district initiatives and government directives upon the ordinary elementary schools in Hertfordshire between 1918 and 1935. It concentrates upon the urban districts because immigration primarily affected them, and because the county council set its mind firmly against rural reorganisation. The developments are analysed from three viewpoints - the secular groupings within the towns, the religious groupings, and the LEA. The chapter argues that the inter-war years did not witness the consistent attempt by a mean-spirited LEA to cut back investment in elementary education, and neither did they witness a neglect of the interests of individual towns, or the demise of Nonconformist and Anglican initiatives. Instead, they saw the transition of the education committee from a body which positively welcomed the 1921 recession as the means to avoid educational development - as witnessed in the realm of technical education - to one prepared to fight the Board for the right of its urban districts to determine their educational needs, however idiosyncratic and expensive. The turning point came in the mid-1920s, when vacillations within the Conservative government threatened the provision of schools in the rapidly expanding towns.

Although the county council initially welcomed the chance to seek further financial savings, the realisation that virtually none was possible heralded the further truth that local educational needs were totally out of synchronisation with national political and economic fortunes. With some irony, by 1931 Hertfordshire LEA - hitherto famed at the Board for its parsimony - was dourly defending an intensive programme of capital investment as the minimum required to satisfy local growth.

Indeed, local district autonomy and self-determination were key factors in the evolution of Hertfordshire's elementary schools. The numerous old, new, market, industrial and residential towns displayed a wide range of opinion regarding schools, and the LEA displayed in its turn great consistency in honouring their varied wishes. The local education sub-committees played a major but equivocal part in county educational affairs. Each urban and rural district possessed a sub-committee whose duties were to enforce school attendance, assist in the implementation of new policies, and offer advice to the county committee. Their membership comprised representatives nominated by county, district and parish councils, school managers and the churches, and co-opted members with educational interests and local prestige. As the LEA took great notice of local opinion, and as civil parishes had to bear 75% of the cost of capital improvements to schools, these sub-committees exercised considerable influence over local developments. However, their claim to reflect the range of local opinion accurately did not go unchallenged as the period progressed, and increasingly they became just one group out of several contributing to LEA decisions. In the 1930s this was particularly true of burgeoning towns where powerful Labour and Nonconformist groups deeply mistrusted the local education sub-committees, seeing them as the arm of a predominantly Conservative and Anglican LEA. Ironically these suspicions reached their height just when the

hard-pressed county education committee itself was castigating certain urban sub-committees for lethargy regarding the encouragement of technical education courses and the identification of imminent building requirements.

So great was local urban growth that most large towns enjoyed or endured two clear rounds of post-Hadow government inspired reorganisation in the inter-war years, a phenomenon which highlights the dramatic change in attitude by the LEA. The first round, between 1928 and 1931, tended to be a cheap and hurried affair, comprising redesignated rather than refurbished schools and incorporating unpopular attempts to redefine catchment areas rather than rebuild schools. The second, starting in 1934, came after the LEA had accepted responsibility for an almost unending programme of educational development and the need for the education committee and its spearhead - the Schools Reorganisation Committee - to think on an increasingly long-term scale, and to take the lead in gaining local agreement for comprehensive district reorganisation schemes.

From the perspective of the Anglican diocese of St. Albans, the inter-war years represented both a threat and an opportunity. The threat was dire, as Board directives raised the standards of accommodation and facilities, and, in the light of the Hadow Report of 1926, encouraged the division into junior and senior elementary schools. The opportunity lay in parishes securing a permanent place in reorganisation schemes. Certainly during the early 1920s the LEA patently avoided embarrassing those impoverished Anglican school managers unable to agree to either expansion or reorganisation. Gradually, however, government pressures and surging immigration rendered such tacit agreements inoperable. In addition, throughout the period, parishes were encouraged by a particularly vigorous and partisan diocesan bishop to raise funds and use every

legal advantage to delay decisions and negotiate the most favourable terms with Board and LEA.

The price was high. The militant and far from ecumenical campaign fought by the bishop, and by many like-minded incumbents, startled and stirred old enemies. Beginning in the 1920s, and reaching a savage climax in the later 1930s, Nonconformist congregations strenuously resisted the resurgent efforts of Anglicans to maintain and even expand their sphere of influence. In this battle, many Hertfordshire towns witnessed a clear division of political as well as religious forces, with Conservative and Anglican groups pitted against Liberal, Labour and Nonconformist alliances, and with the battle lines far more clearly and evenly divided than on the county council. The LEA sought desperately, although without complete success, to avoid embroilment in sectarian disputes, but was increasingly obliged to be arbiter, using educational and legal criteria to judge, in many cases, essentially religious, social and political conflicts. Fundamentally, in the 1930s the LEA sought long-term solutions not short-term ones or delays, and viewed its erstwhile Anglican partner as a useful but minor relief of the rates at best, and an acutely frustrating centre of disharmony and obstruction at worst.

This chapter, although self-contained and concerned with the cause and consequences of Hertfordshire's "moment of truth" in the second half of the 1920s, also introduces the next chapter, which is concerned with the 1936 Education Act and its aftermath. The thesis goes on to argue that with a soaring population, a backlog of building work, a multitude of demanding towns, a policy of local self-determination, a hard-pressed but unabashed Anglican diocese, and numerous controversies and impasses over Hadow-style reorganisation, very nearly everyone in Hertfordshire saw the 1936 Education Act as their saviour - and so it proved to be.

(ii)

**"..NO EDUCATION COMMITTEE IN ENGLAND WAS COMPOSED OF A MORE
FAIRMINDED BODY OF LADIES AND GENTLEMEN."**

**FROM CENTRAL DIRECTION TO LOCAL AUTONOMY:
THE ARMISTICE TO THE MID-1920s**

This chapter pursues the argument that the education committee was highly selective in its policy decisions after 1918. Members responded positively to some of the post-war demands laid upon them by central government and local growth, while at the same time using every opportunity to evade expenditure on others. From time to time the committee miscalculated, but its decisions were far from arbitrary. As previous chapters have shown, education committee members were well aware of all their powers, including their significant power to do nothing when the law or circumstances permitted. In general, the development of Practical Instruction required positive action. In general, the preservation of the rural schools merely merited their steadfast exclusion from either major or minor reorganisation schemes. A third type of response characterised the LEA's attitude towards the expansion and modernisation of ordinary elementary school provision in the growing towns. In this major respect, for a nearly a decade after 1918 the committee continued its pre-war predilection for rarely exercising its right to initiate developments, making a virtue out of limiting itself to responding to local districts' perception of their needs. The LEA could rely upon most localities to desire only minimal expenditure, and then without haste, particularly as

local district decisions were so directly linked to local district rates. However, the LEA was consistent, the same policy of accommodation applying to the towns disinclined to procrastinate, leading, of course, to great disparities in local educational provision.

In addition, during the early 1920s the LEA generally deferred to the wishes of voluntary school managers and diocesan authorities, and rarely brought pressure to bear upon them to make final decisions regarding new buildings or reorganisation. Although the law gave voluntary school managers full negotiating rights in local reorganisation discussions, few county councillors had any objections to the widespread Anglican influence in Hertfordshire schools, and many such as Sir John Pank, Canon Glossop and Captain Morris, successively chairmen of the education committee, actively welcomed it. A minority, including the Quaker, Alderman Graveson, the fourth education committee chairman in the period, clearly regretted the almost total demise of a balancing Nonconformist influence. Most councillors, however, irrespective of their sectarian allegiance, appreciated the financial advantages of voluntary involvement in education, a public economy repeatedly made clear by all four chairmen. In addition, the voluntary school managers represented sympathetic forces generally desiring changes as few and as gradual as the LEA. They were, of course, forever fearful of further financial demands upon dwindling congregations, and of the possibility of relinquishing control of yet more impoverished schools.

Throughout the period between the 1918 Education Act and the 1926 Hadow Report, the LEA's policy of ad hoc response to local initiatives was seen as masterly by the county press. Yet the LEA was far from apathetic. A distinct set of local priorities were paramount, and these were low rates, the protection of rural schools, the encouragement of

practical courses, the development of vocational biases, and the minimal expansion of secondary education. Despite the regular and well-reported outbursts of particularly parsimonious county councillors, the LEA's policy was not simply the avoidance of expenditure and all things new in education. Indeed, the very vehemence of the outbursts were a recognition of that point. The LEA was concerned with the active and occasionally aggressive promotion of particular features in education which were held to benefit the needs of employers and ratepayers in a traditionally agricultural but now increasingly urbanised and industrial county.

From the outset, the 1918 Education Act met with an equivocal reception in Hertfordshire. A minority certainly saw it as stimulating both national efficiency and individual fulfilment. Most sympathisers came from the progressively inclined expanding industrial boroughs in the south. The Barnet Press welcomed the prospect of curriculum diversity at 11 being provided by a mix of schools.(1) The Watford Teachers' Guild and the Barnet Labour Party joined with visiting speakers Margaret MacMillan and Frank Roscoe in petitioning the LEA to extend generous educational provision "downwards" to nursery schools, and "upwards" to central and continuation schools. (2) Yet the LEA was undoubtedly distrusted by those favouring reform, and with some justification. The press, and visiting speakers such as Sir Cyril Cobb MP, were less than sanguine about its inclination to use its new powers to the utmost to promote a wide range of educational opportunities.(3) Adding substance to these doubts was the open sympathy among many county councillors for a minimal LEA response. The Honourable A.T.Holland-Hibbert, later Viscount Knutsford, bluntly admitted his "principle interest" would now lie in monitoring the cost of new schools.(4) Another feared that improved secular education combined with the likely demise of church schools would

merely make "clever little devils" out of working class children.(5) A third saw the Act as a further damaging collectivist blow "weakening the moral sense of duty among a large section of parents."(6) The majority, whether believing the Act wholly destructive, or in sympathy with at least some of its aims, were united in their fear of its cost. For most education committee members, the Act was too generous and too radical in its overall intentions towards elementary education. Not only would rates rise, but much of the money would be ill-spent. Canon Glossop spoke anxiously about "the tremendously ambitious and expensive Act", and William Graveson doubted whether the "very great possibilities" in the Act compensated for its "very great difficulties in regard to finance."(7) Their hostility to the Act stemmed not so much from opposition to elementary education per se, but to an unnecessarily indulgent all-round expansion of it.

The chairman, J.L.Pank, openly shared the composite religious, social, educational and financial opinions of these colleagues, and bearing in mind his long-established personal ascendancy over the committee he had chaired since 1902, his view was immensely important.(8) Certainly he made no effort to act in the spirit of Circular 1119 and encourage local district interest in the development scheme which the LEA was obliged to produce, publicise and discuss. (9) Belatedly, in March 1919 the education committee established an Education Act Special Scheme Sub-Committee, but only in June 1920, after fifteen months deliberation, was an interim report published.

The report confirmed the low priority accorded most developments in elementary education throughout Hertfordshire well before the financial panic aroused by the economic recession swept the country.(10) Some local education sub-committees demanded yet more time for thought,

and most assumed the way forward should be through the reorganisation of existing facilities rather than building programmes. It is significant that their deliberations had taken place against a background including a Press campaign now biased heavily in favour of minimal action, as well as a LEA manifestly uninterested in taking any general lead. Since 1919 local editors had joined the steady opposition to the allegedly ill-conceived aspects of educational reform. They had made no secret of their own vested interest in child labour, a factor adding zest to their leaders after the county council refused to make a bye-law allowing limited work outside school hours.(11) They aimed primarily at inflaming doubts about the values inherent in compulsory continuation schools, notably the threat it posed to individual self-determination and free-will. The Hertfordshire Record, for example, castigated the whole concept as "typical Prussianism", crude, cranky and costly, and later luridly portrayed the "education maniac" forcing "his peculiarities on other people, regardless of the taste or predilection of his prospective victims, and with a majestic indifference to expense."(12)

Other articles in the same vein condemned the Board as the "archwaster", and considered it pernicious folly "to force youths and maidens to continue as learners against their will."(13)

Not surprisingly, the interim report revealed the mix of vacillation, biases and genuine difficulties in each district. With regard to continuation classes and schools, private rooms and halls were found eventually for hire in Harpenden, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Sawbridgeworth, and spare space identified in Bishop's Stortford's Technical Institute. Elsewhere, even after a year, solutions eluded committees. Schools were full, and nothing could be hired. Accommodation would only be available in Baldock, Barnet, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon when new schools proposed years earlier were eventually constructed. No accommodation

could be found in Bushey, Berkhamsted, Hertford, St.Albans, Stevenage, Tring, Ware or Watford, nor were there any immediate school building plans likely to resolve the situation in the near future.(14)

Local education sub-committees fared a little better on the whole when seeking space for advanced and practical instruction for senior pupils. As previous chapters have noted, the LEA had already developed practical instruction centres in a few towns, and the discipline, training and usefulness identified in much of this feature of ordinary elementary work met with far greater local support than the attempt to prolong working class schooling in general through continuation classes. A few districts, including Barnet, Cheshunt, St.Albans, Ware and Watford, opted to establish central schools, all by reorganising existing schools and facilities. Another group, including Bishop's Stortford, Berkhamsted, Harpenden, Royston, Sawbridgeworth, Stevenage and Tring, decided to free a few rooms and workshops by rearranging existing schools, and these, along with hired halls and houses, were deemed adequate for Fisher's advanced instruction.(15) However, a third group - Baldock, Bushey, Hitchin, Hoddesdon, Letchworth and Rickmansworth - stated nothing could be done, despite their searches for space, until new building works had provided senior classes, departments or schools. Perhaps the borough of Hertford epitomised the feeling that any ad hoc arrangements would suffice by stating its proposed senior elementary school - and therefore in effect the Education Act - would have to wait for whenever the grammar school erected its new building and vacated its old one.(16)

The recession became the means whereby Hertfordshire's procrastination was elevated locally to the status of wise deliberation and prudent planning. Suddenly national policy coincided with local inclination in the Board's

Circular 1185, issued in December 1920, which deferred the acceptance, let alone the implementation, of new LEA schemes, and Circular 1190 a few weeks later which allowed only proposals of "special urgency" to be submitted for approval and grant.(17) It was too late for progressive groups, such as the militant Letchworth Parents' Education Association, founded in October 1920 specifically to lobby the LEA, to influence events.(18) Shrill cries for economy were in the ascendant. In November 1920 several editorials urged utmost frugality on the county council. Their message was that public profligacy, notably in elementary education, was elevating the working classes, "killing the middle classes", and destabilising society.(19) Pank could not have put it better, and in February 1921 the unfinished county scheme was formally placed in abeyance.(20) Already one outspoken Socialist, Canon Papillon of St.Albans, had conceded that "the flicker of enthusiasm had died", the "ratepayers are becoming restive", and "passive resistance" to the 1918 Act was operating at all levels within the county.(21)

Areas of local economy were actively sought, and yet they proved hard to find, especially as the education committee reacted far from indiscriminately. The steps which had been taken to promote advanced and practical instruction were now protected, as were small rural schools.

Nevertheless cuts were made in general book and stationery allowances, pupil-teacher salaries, and the building repair list. As a result the elementary education rate went down 1d to 1s 9½d in 1921-22, and then to 1s 8½d in 1922-23.(22) In April 1922 Pank expressed the general complacency by commenting to members -

"A penny less, I trust you will think it satisfactory."
(23) It represented the satisfaction that the education committee was securely in the driving seat once more. The majority of county councillors seemed to have been proved right - it made far more sense economically, educationally

and socially to adapt developments to particular county circumstances and needs than to march in strict and general accord to government dictate.

As a result of staff cuts, a few school closures, and general savings on heating, lighting and caretaking, the elementary rate for 1923-24 was set at 1s 6d, a satisfying further reduction of 2½d.(24) The cost per child had dropped by nearly 10% - from £5:0s:9d in 1921-22 to £4:10s:5d in 1923-24.(25) Yet the LEA's actions were hesitation and modest compared with the calls coming from some politically charged quarters. For some, including the rabidly reactionary Hertfordshire Record, the cuts were not nearly enough to save the country from ruin, "the inevitable result of Socialism in practice."(26) Lord Robert Cecil told his Hitchin constituents the country had culpably failed to heed the Geddes Report, and Rear Admiral Murray Sueter condemned as "impatient and unreasonable" his Hertford constituents lobbying MPs against education cuts.(27)

More closely matching the ambitions of most education committee members were the views of Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle, the ex-county and school medical officer now MP for St.Albans. He was less acerbic than Cecil and Sueter, but believed the halt in implementing Fisher's proposals, especially the provision of continuation schools, was right. It would provide time

"to devise schemes more adaptable to the varied needs and capacities of different children."(28)

Such arguments met with widespread and consistent support throughout the county, and contributed to the steady developments in practical, technical, advanced and rural elementary education. These developments were usually pragmatic, frequently opportunist, and sometimes piecemeal, but by the later 1930s they had accumulated into

comprehensive and distinct rural and urban systems of schooling. They were governed far more by local district initiatives than Board dictates, and they were remarkably consistent considering the fluctuations in national economic and political fortunes. The clear and long-standing goal was local self-determination. The LEA bent with political and economic winds, and it was not unduly swayed by them, but it was adept at using them to advantage. Such attributes could mean either cuts or investment depending on the educational facility under scrutiny. In the event the most difficult inter-war years for the education committee happened to be 1918 to 1924, the uncertain years of acutely unwelcome government direction, economic uncertainty and teacher militancy. After then, the way forward became increasingly clearer, and the biases increasingly intensive.

In this context, it is significant that by the mid-1920s the LEA had secured the wholehearted support of the teachers, and never lost it. The education committee's dealings with the elementary school teachers during the immediate post-war years emphasises the tension between the spirit of accommodation and the pragmatic desire to keep rates down. A prolonged and initially bitter dispute lasted from 1919 until 1923, and was as much about the development of new attitudes as new salaries. The LEA was coming to terms with a host of radical reforms, not the least of which was Fisher's desire to raise the financial security, status and morale of the teaching profession. In contrast with this exalted vision, the county education committee considered the teachers ungrateful, provocative and Socialistic, while the teachers believed the LEA to be mean, uncaring and unrealistic. Nevertheless, the bruising experience led directly to a dramatic and lasting improvement in the quality of the relationship between the LEA and its elementary teaching force. The LEA was obliged to treat teachers with greater respect, and adopted a policy of regular consultation. The teachers responded by inviting

senior education committee members and county officers to their conferences, and spoke of feeling honoured by their presence. Henceforth each party acknowledged warmly, publicly, and frequently, the virtues and services of the other. In 1919 a militant teaching force had seemed the last straw, but in the longer term the repercussions from the episode worked to the LEA's advantage. To some extent the teachers obliged the education committee to earn their loyalty, but, being far from radical in their own thinking, for the rest of the inter-war years the teachers provided the LEA with steadfast and very welcome professional support for its evolving emphases in rural and urban schools.

The dispute took place during a period combining inflation and the transition from locally negotiated salaries to the national scales emanating from Lord Burnham's Committee. Each of the phases in the dispute witnessed the patrician county education committee coming to terms with the restless post-war educational scene in a disconcertingly fast-growing Home County. First, in April 1919 the LEA issued a revised salary scale, backdated a year.(29) The NUT agreed the scales, and the LEA thought the problem solved.(30) However, a few months later, to the accompaniment of a vigorous supporting newspaper campaign, the teachers petitioned for an inflation bonus backdated to April.(31) Whatever the Press said, the education committee believed that to give too much too soon to teachers would be interpreted by ratepayers as administrative ineptitude, economic folly and political weakness. In December 1919 a new scale was offered by the LEA, phased over three years and based upon the Burnham committee's minimum recommendations.(32) The offer was rendered more humiliating by education committee members' sarcastic statements that long holidays, short hours and the non-contributory pension scheme were more than adequate compensation for modest salaries.(33) The teacher representatives on the committee sharply rejected both the

offer and the servile view of their profession, warning of flagging efforts, desertions to higher paid neighbouring authorities and a dearth of recruits.(34) The critical moment had been reached. Pank's resentment at the unprecedented audacity of Hertfordshire teachers boiled over, and he signalled his preparedness for outright confrontation.(35)

Nevertheless, a few weeks later accommodation prevailed. The education committee was mollified by a fortuitously timed government grant of three-fifths of the salaries which the LEA now offered in full, and backdated to October 1st 1919.(36) County councillors passed the new scales amidst further asides about "silver linings", "free" pensions, and lengthy holidays, and relations continued to be confused and sour.(37) The LEA, though, was under severe pressure. In June 1920 the interim report of the Education Act Special Scheme Sub-Committee confirmed the impending shortage of elementary teachers caused by a combination of local urban expansion and more attractive salaries in LEAs to the south of Hertfordshire.(38) The ensuing panic was not lost on the teachers. Soon afterwards, the Burnham Committee created a London higher salary area (Scale IV) which included neighbouring Middlesex. This prompted the HCTA to follow colleagues in Kent and Surrey, and petition the county council for substantially improved salaries.(39)

Such was the volatile nature of the times that suddenly the initiative passed back again to the LEA. The recession signalled the end of any comprehensive system of continuation education, and rendered the shortage of staff less acute. Public opinion turned towards economies, and firmly against the complaints of teachers. In January 1921, the Press praised the steadfast education committee for rejecting outright the HCTA's request.(40) Pank now epitomised the prescient guardian of local affairs.(41)

Later that year, the Burnham Committee allocated Hertfordshire to the new Scale II, the general scale for the southern shires. The LEA looked generous in accepting the small rises involved, and the HCTA saved face by doing likewise.(42) There was nothing to be gained by doing anything else - the current salaries were discouraging recruitment and the LEA would have lost the Treasury's 60% grant if it had stuck to them, and the teachers could not hope for more.

Equally significantly, there was no exchange of insults and threats. Councillors seem to have noted the benefits of tact and diplomacy. Indeed the middle years of the decade - 1923 to 1926 - saw fundamental changes in the relationship between the LEA and HCTA bearing fruit, characterised by a growing sense of partnership in the face of new developments. The LEA recognised the educational and administrative advantages of a sympathetic HCTA, and the HCTA welcomed the rise in professional status implied by the LEA's willingness to consult it regularly. The Burnham Committee had virtually removed salary negotiations from local hands, and with it a major source of suspicion and disagreement. Oddly, the depression itself was also conducive to improved relations. Most teachers accepted the need for economies and the associated rationalisation of educational provision. The HCTA might lament particular cutbacks, but it noted the refurbished and enlarged schools and the investment in practical subjects, and by 1923 it was praising the LEA's devotion to elementary education and its teachers. In March that year a teacher representative on the county education committee stated publicly that

"no Education Committee in England was composed of a more fairminded body of ladies and gentlemen."(43)

A few months later, in June, the HCTA applauded the efforts to eradicate unsatisfactory buildings, and an editorial highlighted the "friendly co-operation of the two bodies", comparing it favourably with conflicts raging in other Authorities.(44)

The editorial was referring to the frostiness existing elsewhere over the continuing employment of married women teachers at a time of increasing professional unemployment. Hertfordshire county council withstood a vigorous public campaign to hound them from office, although mollifying critics by advising managers only to appoint single women, except where a married woman was the breadwinner or no other candidate was available.(45) However several very pragmatic reasons stayed the LEA's hand in the face of the onslaught, only one of which was the sensitivities of the teaching profession. First, prudence dictated caution, a policy justified by the judicial decisions against rasher LEAs serving dismissal notices.(46) Second, the LEA was well aware its actions in this matter were not binding on non-provided school managers, and therefore could appear discriminatory.(47) Finally, current Hertfordshire salaries and staffing trends indicated 151 married women teachers could not easily be replaced, despite the national situation.(48) Nevertheless, the firm stance of the LEA between 1922 and 1924 impressed the HCTA. Indeed, it was at this time, the summer of 1923, that senior education committee members and officials began to attend HCTA conferences, and drinking the health of the education committee became enshrined as a conference tradition.(49)

Canon Glossop succeeded Pank in 1923, and he and Sir Charles Longmore actively sought conciliation with the HCTA. The LEA's determined opposition to implementing the 5% salary cut offered by the NUT nationally, as a "contribution to the financial necessities of the Nation and of the Local Authorities", was particularly appreciated by local teachers.(50) Glossop agreed with the fearful HCTA that the meanness of the recent Hertfordshire settlements, and especially the three year transition to a less than generous Scale II, made the reduction both injurious and insulting.(51) After long and heated debates, Glossop secured both education committee and county council

support.(52) Longmore subsequently fought the case with the Board which, "with considerable hesitation and as an exceptional measure", eventually acquiesced.(53)

In 1924 the HCTA assured Glossop and Longmore of its trust, and in return the LEA seems to have cooperated wholeheartedly in the awkward but ultimately successful negotiations with Lord Burnham over the transfer of salaries to Scale III.(54) By then this warmer and mutually supportive professional relationship, combined with the demise of unpopular features of Fisher's Act, was greatly assisting the LEA as it pursued its preferred policies in rural education, in practical instruction, in reducing the backlog of minor repairs, and in leaving most other innovations to local districts.

(iii)

**"..IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO MEET THE WISHES
OF THE LOCALITY"**

THE LEA AND PRE-HADOW DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

THE MID-1920s

In the mid-1920s the education committee sounded totally committed to comprehensive cutbacks, and stridently so when Captain Morris succeeded Canon Glossop as chairman in 1925. (55) However, the economies continued to be carefully selected and to this significant extent the rhetoric was deceptive. Nevertheless, certain areas of education were hard hit - those of lesser significance to the majority of members. The basic standard of comfort was threatened by reduced budgets for routine cleaning, heating and lighting, and maintenance. The staff salary rises, although small, incited searches for compensatory savings and these were made at the price of experienced teachers. For most of the decade a general bar, although never inviolable, was imposed on appointing teachers with more than six incremental points, and in some years the limit was reduced to four. (56)

For a short period in 1924-1925, county education committee priorities began to differ discernably from those of the Board which began to oblige general reinvestment rather than particular reductions. Just at the time the LEA hoped to offset the cost of Scale III by reducing the number of teachers in stricter accord with the overall decline in the elementary school population, the Board called for a dearer, not cheaper, redistribution of staff. (57) Circular 1325

required a substantial reduction in the 92 Hertfordshire elementary school classes with more than 50 pupils.(58) Soon afterwards, Circular 1360 reduced the staff values of Certificated teachers from 60 to 50 pupils, and Uncertificated teachers from 35 to 30 pupils, in all schools with rolls below 250.(59)

When the flicker of government encouragement was extinguished late in 1925, education committee members felt reassured that local autonomy was not to be seriously threatened. They preferred the shadows of Lord Eustace Percy's Circular 1371 issued in November 1925, and its sequel, Memorandum 44. Under Cabinet pressure, the President had reversed the policy of cautious progress, and replaced the percentage grant with a block grant formula calculated to reduce by 1% the amount received by any LEA. This came only nine months after Circular 1358 and Memorandum 43 had urged LEAs to undertake a comprehensive review of their educational facilities and plan a three year advance on a broad front - buildings, health, scholarships, practical, advanced and continuation education, and including the possibility of raising the leaving age.(60) In December 1925 the TES hailed the unanimity of the educational outcry at Percy's volte-face, that

"with one accord local authorities, administrators, and teachers of all grades have rejected the whole scheme",

forgetful that the Marquis of Salisbury in the House of Lords, and Hertfordshire county council in the shires, were among the minority accepting with grim satisfaction the reimposition of restrictions.(61) County judgements seemed to have been proved wiser than national ones.

In fact a moment of truth had arrived. Early in 1926 the education committee squeezed further savings of £5,000 through employing cheaper staff and postponing more maintenance work, but as the vice-chairman, William

Graveson, ruefully had to admit,

"expenditure was cut down considerably a few years ago and little more could be done now."(62)

All capital work was postponed except for schools already under construction, those replacing condemned buildings, and those planned for new areas of population.(63) However, on detailed examination, the education committee found that 90% of the building work proposed in 1925 for the triennial period 1927-30 was firmly in these three "essential" categories, and anxiety ran high until the LEA was reassured that Treasury grants would still be forthcoming.(64) The difficulty experienced in identifying so few reductions in capital spending clearly startled and frustrated education committee members, but the episode signalled, whether they fully appreciated it or not, that a major expansion and reorganisation of urban elementary education was under way. It was also occurring several years before the Hadow recommendations were put into practice, and although the break at eleven was not an *idée fixe*, it was already an *idée reçue* in Hertfordshire's urban schemes.

In several important respects 1926 had proved a turning point in elementary educational developments in the county. The education committee took the firm decision that year to introduce the Rural Syllabus. It was beginning to encourage technical education. It had learnt to accept Watford's initiatives without demur, and it was looking sympathetically at Letchworth's Civic College scheme. Hertfordshire's urban expansion now obliged members to face up squarely to the prospect of a permanent and heavy capital programme of investment in elementary education. The vacillations within the cabinet which temporarily reversed Board policy made this awareness sudden, painful, and clear. Hertfordshire's first triennial programme survived largely unscathed as it was in fact the minimum required to contain local urban expansion. Everyone locally recognised this, and ironically the bemused education committee received commendation from several very different quarters for its

extensive plans. The HCTA had respectfully petitioned the LEA to stand by its proposals, and undoubtedly felt its trust had been vindicated.(65) Try as they might, local editors could find little to fault, and conceded that mass immigration rather than extravagance was the cause of the regrettably long list of works.(66)

The new works, although modest in comparison with programmes a decade later, were unprecedented in number and cost - all at a time when ratepayers were facing both financial uncertainty and political vacillation in government circles. (67) In this respect the LEA had justification for its anxiety about grants, but the Board, too, found nothing to criticise.(68) Although the vagaries of local discussions led to some amendments, the programme planned to provide 2,200 new places, replace three category "A" Black List schools, and replace or substantially refurbish several others on Black Lists "B" and "C".(69) The approved capital costs for elementary education in 1927-28 were £64,834, of which £57,180 was allocated to new schools in Hoddesdon, Hitchin, London Colney, St.Albans and Bishop's Stortford. The figure for 1928-29 was £21,220, of which £14,065 was for a new school in overcrowded Watford, and most of the remainder reserved for furnishing the schools built the previous year. The final figure, for 1929-30, was £61,358, of which £56,458 was for building and equipping new schools in rapidly expanding Welwyn Garden City, Letchworth, Barnet, Harpenden and Abbots Langley, and the central school in St.Albans.(70)

The LEA's policy of allowing the wide variety of market, commuter and industrial towns considerable autonomy in their educational decisions meant it experienced positive pressures for developments as well as active hostility or passive resistance to change. Certainly two schools in the programme were not built. Local council and education

sub-committee objections in Bishop's Stortford led finally to repairs and minor extensions to an existing crumbling council school, and bitter rivalries between Anglican parishes prevented any new school in Abbots Langley. Indeed, as Captain Morris said, sincerely if rather complacently, when faced with Bishop's Stortford's decision,

"the aim and object of the Education Committee was in every way possible to meet the wishes of the locality concerned, recognising that upon it fell the great portion of the expenditure which must be incurred."(71)

There were certainly no moves by the LEA to regain local agreement to the new schools. A wholehearted welcome for both local and county council investment in elementary education was limited to the few towns where three vital factors were present - the population was growing, it was commercially and industrially orientated, and formal church interests in education were negligible. Two older boroughs possessing all these characteristics were Barnet and Watford. Two far newer towns with an undoubted enthusiasm for education were Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities. Both were iconoclastic and avant-garde in their outlook, prosperous economically, and had founding companies possessing considerable funds. Both retained an ambivalent but far from unfriendly relationship with the county council. They saw the LEA as unimaginative and backward-looking but not ungenerous or beyond redemption, while the LEA saw the towns as disconcertingly idealistic but clear-sighted, well-organised and very willing to share financial burdens. Basically speaking, the Garden Cities sought the conversion of the LEA, and the LEA sought to accommodate the Garden Cities. In both towns religion was important, but not controversial. For example, in Letchworth the old-established Anglican school at Norton was much respected, and supported financially by the Garden City Company.(72)

Letchworth's greatest problem was neither the LEA nor the churches, but an impassive Board of Education. As the Civic College concept in the mid-1920s epitomised,

Letchworth was motivated by a vision of education founded upon a close partnership with the LEA. As that episode also showed, Morris and the education committee did not spurn such a mutually advantageous educational and financial partnership. However, the abrupt demise of that scheme in 1927 was not the only occasion the Board reined in the LEA's willingness to promote developments in that persuasive and progressive town. In 1919 the LEA agreed to provide a secondary school and a third all-age elementary school.(73) The Board quickly dispelled local euphoria by cancelling the project during the recession.(74) Letchworth fought back, largely through its militant and misleadingly named Parents' Education Association, an organisation embracing all interested parties - the city planners, teachers from all types of schools, clergy of all denominations, councillors of all political persuasions, and Ebenezer Howard himself. It rejected the offer of ex-Army huts, and fought vigorously for the original proposals.(75) Indeed, Letchworth was already moving towards its goal of a broad and balanced general primary schooling, followed by a wide range of secondary courses equal in status, staff and facilities.

The town's campaign was shrewdly fought and very well-publicised. Its venom was carefully reserved for a mean-spirited government, and as the campaigners prophesied, the education committee was not unmoved by the strength of local feeling.(76) In 1922 the LEA duly resubmitted detailed proposals for junior and senior elementary schools to the Board.(77) The Board responded by amalgamating them into one smaller school of the cheapest design, and in a unique decision an outraged and united Letchworth totally rejected the "makeshift" school.(78) Once again the LEA responded favourably to the well-orchestrated outcry, and returned to the fray. In 1923 a compromise acceptable to all was reached whereby the school hall was omitted - but easily added later - and the materials and style of construction much improved.(79)

Welwyn Garden City grew from green fields to prosperous industrial town at breakneck speed throughout the interwar years. In 1921 the LEA imposed stringent economies and then delays on its first school for the new town, but the City Company reacted shrewdly by making the education committee an irresistible offer.(80) If work started at once, costs could be cut yet further by using the City Company's architect and builders, and the first in a series of sound bargains was quickly struck.(81) In May 1923 Louis de Soissons' new style, part timber, part concrete slab and wholly flat-roofed building was opened amidst great publicity, and greeted as a masterpiece of light, airy and spacious design.(82) Through its well-coordinated local resources, financial acumen, and absence of faction, the town had seized the educational initiative, and it never lost it. Within the next four years the smooth expansion of the first school, and the erection of a second, were characterised by the City's same skilful blend of social commitment, urban planning and business expertise to gain the LEA's ready agreement to its educationally impeccable and financially attractive development plans.(83)

The Garden Cities had clear and radical educational goals, very different from the trends evolving throughout Hertfordshire. As visiting and county dignitaries were told at the opening of de Soissons' first school in 1923, up to the age of eight play methods would dominate education, between eight and eleven a careful balance would be struck between academic, practical and aesthetic education, and between eleven and fifteen or sixteen academic, agricultural and technical courses would be developed with equal status, staffing and facilities. The secondary-elementary divide would be ignored, and certainly all Welwyn's elementary school buildings were proof of this intention.(84) Yet the county education committee never stood in the way of these educational goals. The financial inducements were obviously significant, but, in a county very conscious of

the amorphous suburbs and ribbon development spreading across the southern border, the well-coordinated, clear-sighted and self-controlled Garden Cities seemed an attractive alternative model for the future.(85) The oddness of Letchworth - the town once possessing a Society for the Complete Obliteration of the Past - had faded, and it now represented a highly relevant example of integrated social, economic and cultural planning and development.(86) That once derided utopian community, and the fully-serviced industrial town at Welwyn, fast became bulwarks, both real and symbolic, against the chaos of unrestrained urbanisation. Within this general context, they also provided an ideal in education which the LEA - far from wishing to discredit - respected and consistently supported as the reflection of local district wishes. In addition, although any relief of the rates was always alluring, the LEA's overly-sympathetic attitude towards the Garden Cities' schools was more than tinged by a degree of pride at being associated with these well-known and now rather fashionable urban experiments.

(iv)

"STAND THEREFORE!"

THE REAWAKENING OF CHURCH INTERESTS AND INVOLVEMENT

1918-1926

In 1918 there were 254 voluntary elementary schools in Hertfordshire, compared with 107 provided by the county council.(87) Of the 254 "non-provided" schools, 245 were Church of England, 7 were Roman Catholic, and 2 were Nonconformist but undenominational in character. The Anglican church still retained its hold, either firm or infirm, over much of the elementary education in the towns as well as the villages. This section sets within the overall county context the dilemma of religious bodies, but notably the Anglican diocese of St.Albans, regarding their continuing influence over local elementary education at a time of rapid change. Ideology and financial necessity, in varying degrees, prompted some incumbents to negotiate new agreements with the LEA, ranging from the abandonment of voluntary schools to the erection of new ones. Ideology and financial necessity, in varying degrees, also led other clergy to oppose all change. The LEA displayed perennial tolerance of clerical vagaries, a characteristic explained by another mix of motives - legal obligation, financial advantage, a belief in local district autonomy, and the personal predilections of a majority of education committee members. Nevertheless, on many occasions the relationship became fraught, usually when the demographic pressures obliging some sort of action became acute, and it is these situations which reveal the growing tensions within the Dual System, and the ways the partnership was increasingly

strained. The problems occurred mainly in the expanding towns, and they occurred throughout the county - in older market centres, in industrial conurbations, and in the predominantly commuter towns. In 1918 the LEA was happy to allow Anglican parishes to call the educational tune, and by and large await events, sometimes for years; by 1939 the LEA had been obliged to seize the initiative in numerous reorganisation schemes, the Anglicans were fighting for their educational survival in many towns, and both parties were besieged by resurgent Nonconformist congregations, usually in formidable alliance with local Liberal and Labour groups. In 1918 the Dual System possessed distinct advantages for the LEA; by 1939 it was, on balance, a liability. In 1918 the LEA went out of its way to protect Anglican interests, but by 1939 it was remorselessly marginalising its erstwhile partner. The inter-war years were critical for the Dual System and witnessed dramatic changes in the nature of the partnership.

In 1918 the Anglican church seemed in a strong position in Hertfordshire. The county council had every intention of preserving country schools, the vast majority of them Church of England foundations. The Nonconformists seemed to have accepted with equanimity the loss of very nearly all their schools, and were expressing no overt opposition to the preservation of Anglican ones. Pank, the chairman of the education committee, was an avowed Anglican, and in an autobiographical sketch in 1920 he admitted his greatest triumph had been gaining the trust, after "tremendous fights" in the wake of the 1902 Education Act, of the powerful Nonconformist group on the education committee.(88) In an unusual but universally acclaimed appointment, Pank's successor in 1923 was Canon Glossop of St.Albans. Far from inciting suspicion, his election indicated the harmony among the churches. Primarily he was acknowledged for his "unusually keen enthusiasm" for education, but he was also

persona grata with all denominations, holding governorships of Nonconformist foundations, notably Bishop's Stortford College.(89)

In addition, throughout the inter-war years the diocese of St.Albans had a bishop determined to preserve Anglican involvement in education. In 1919 the Rt Revd Michael Bolton Furse was translated from the see of Pretoria.(90) Heralded as " 'muscular Christianity' personified" and "hating extremes, either up or down", Furse was a tireless pastor rather than a scholarly theologian. His episcopate lasted until 1944, and witnessed relentless campaigns to promote parish missions, rejuvenate church-based social life, and retain church schools.(91) His personal involvement in fund raising for churches and schools was never-ending, and significantly his exhortatory autobiography, Stand Therefore!, derived its force from the simple assumption only the Church of England could save the nation from moral turpitude.(92) His diocesan inspector of schools, the Revd Basil Reay, represented a less partisan but far less popular view among Anglicans. He discerned the times were critical for voluntary schools, but believed the effective way forward must be through a revitalised Agreed Syllabus, and a concerted advance on a broad Christian rather than sectarian front.(93) He preached the need for all parishes to modernise their attitudes as well as their schools.(94) Reay was unduly, even naively, optimistic about both Nonconformist and Anglican congregations. In the event a vicious circle ensued. Undenominational religious instruction remained anathema to the Anglicans, and the resurgent Anglicanism led Nonconformists to place their faith steadfastly in the hands of LEA initiatives.

Immediately after the war the diocese perceived it had fights on its hands on several fronts. An atheistic



The Rt.Revd. Michael Bolton Furse
Bishop of St.Albans 1919-1944

(Frontispiece - Stand Therefore!)

Socialism seemed in the ascendant, worshippers seemed fewer and frequently indifferent to the fate of their schools, and the 1918 Education Act made the task of keeping up with the secular schools even more daunting. Fundamentally the struggle to avoid marginalisation, especially in the towns, was already under way. Some clergy met head-on the public criticisms of Anglican involvement in elementary education, and in doing so set the tone for future acrimonious debates about urban reorganisation. In Cheshunt, for example, the vicar met the WEA for a much publicised, highly charged but inconclusive debate between those seeing religion as an essential part of education, and those deeming it an impediment.(95) In several towns branches of the Church Managers' and Teachers' Association were hurriedly established to protect the interests of church schools.(96) In Buntingford deanery, the clergy resolved to match the "steadily improving" secular side of education with an intensive programme of school lessons, parish classes and home visits.(97) In 1921 Furse issued his first *cri de coeur*, and urged the clergy as well as the congregations not to flag, and to seek diocesan advice and support before handing over their schools to the LEA.(98)

In many towns the demise of an Anglican school was largely unlamented. Indeed, in Watford, Hertford, Hoddesdon and Walkern the churches initiated closures with their regret more than a little tinged with relief at the release of a considerable burden. The reorganisation schemes forced by the closure of these four schools were undertaken with little local argument, and certainly without controversy, not least because all sectarian involvement in the decision-making process had now disappeared.(99) Central Watford, an early Labour stronghold, showed only the briefest interest in saving its condemned Anglican school, the last one in the borough.(100) Its closure in 1922 obliged the first major renovation and reorganisation of council schools

in Watford, an event subsequently hailed as a great success by headteachers, managers and HMI, all of them claiming the greater concentration of children according to age and sex made for more effective teaching.(101) Events in Hoddesdon should have proceeded similarly, but the actual outcome illustrates the dramatic effect changes in Board policy could have, almost arbitrarily, on local agreements. By 1920 old sectarian rivalries - but also old sectarian benefactions - had faded in the town, and by agreement the crumbling Nonconformist and Anglican schools planned to close within months of each other, hastening the construction of a 800 place council school for the expanding town.(102) In the event the recession obliged the LEA to negotiate with the churches to keep both buildings open with the addition of county council huts.(103) Typically, neither the churches nor the UDC complained when these cheap and temporary measures lasted over five years until local growth finally compelled a new senior school, reorganisation and belated closure in 1926.(104)

By the mid-1920s several towns had been compelled by a combination of unsatisfactory voluntary school premises and an expanding population to reorganise elementary education. Usually the LEA played the part it preferred, that of honest broker negotiating the generally accepted compromise solution between, on the one hand, local managers, churches, councils and education sub-committees, and on the other, the Board and HMI. Usually, also, the cheapest option prevailed. Certainly the LEA could rely on this being the wish of most of the local interested parties, especially the churches. The Board, however, was far less consistent in the degree to which it sanctioned, encouraged or demanded local action during these years of fluctuating economic fortunes. Nevertheless, a recession invariably meant the Board of Education demanded less not more, and as many parishes appreciated, such periods favoured those desiring minimal change. One ironic characteristic of the early and

mid-1920s was the tendency of the Board to delay local action by requiring more substantial work, or wider-ranging solutions, only to have to urge, or agree to, the cheapest possible short-term scheme shortly afterwards because of an adverse turn in the national economy or education budget. Such factors tended to give a respite to besieged voluntary schools, but they also dashed the expectations of others and sharpened sectarian feeling. In Hitchin they led to open Anglican resentment in the early 1920s at the survival of one of the few British schools.(105) Conversely, at the same time they led to widespread regret, and vigorous protest, at the survival of Anglican dominance in Harpenden, where the vicar successfully seized the respite in 1921 to continue his determined campaign to renovate the parish's two schools and keep LEA provision at bay for the remainder of the decade.(106)

Controversy frequently occurred, as in Harpenden, when the Anglican church decided not to bow out, but to maintain or extend its influence when questions of reorganisation and new schools were raised. In such circumstances local feelings often ran high, and always with issues of ecclesiastical privilege, public cost, religious indoctrination, quality of education and freedom of choice interwoven to a greater or lesser degree. The Nonconformist trust which Pank and Reay valued so highly broke at the first test. A generation and more of Nonconformists had watched the steady Anglican withdrawal from local schools, but after 1918 their complacency was undoubtedly shattered. Old Nonconformist jealousies had remained only just under the surface, and aiding their swift resurrection were not only their traditional allies, the local Liberal groups, but also branches of the rising Labour party. By all these the Church of England was condemned as a legally privileged educational anachronism. It perpetuated outmoded aims, and provided poor buildings, inadequate facilities, and a biased education. Adding

insult to injury, many local children were compelled to endure these things irrespective of their families' religious persuasion. This multiplicity of religious, social, economic and politically charged factors was sufficiently broad for the individual religious and political groups to join together in increasingly formidable opposition to Anglican proposals. On the one hand, the more the state raised standards, the harder the Anglican churches had to fight to maintain their role in public education; on the other, the harder they fought, the more obvious became their convictions, the more threatening became the chances of success, and the more vociferous became the concerted opposition. Indeed, the clashes of the 1920s were mere opening skirmishes compared with the battles of the later 1930s.

A variety of factors determined the nature of local alliances for or against church schools. Finance always loomed large in the decisions. For example, in the mid-1920s an Anglican church in Bishop's Stortford faced relatively inchoate opposition while it made up its mind to build a new infants' school. For the economically inclined UDC, however, the substantial saving in local rates promised by Anglican efforts more than outweighed the resentment of those, notably the Nonconformists, who had fought for the rebuilding of the ex-British school.(107) In Rickmansworth Anglican hostility towards any more investment in elementary education was complemented by UDC and local education sub-committee parsimony, and the consequences were dire. In 1921 their combined accusations of extravagance led the LEA to defer the provision of a new elementary school for this steadily although not spectacularly expanding district. Instead, it rearranged the catchment areas and provided a few huts, a cheap solution which cut across a range of social and religious groups, and united them all in furious counter-protest.(108) The UDC and the churches became the targets of families of pupils transferred from a working

class school to a predominantly lower middle class one, of families of children transferred between schools attached to churches of very different traditions, and of non-Anglican families whose children were transferred to denominational schools.(109) Faced with such an unmanageable situation, minds swiftly changed and a council senior school became the only generally accepted solution.(110) As nearly always, the LEA was amenable to local wishes, but the recession led the Board to withdraw its previous agreement, and for fourteen years, until 1936, the two Anglican parishes suffered the unpopular and unresolved exchange of pupils from widely varying social and religious backgrounds.(111)

Nevertheless, Anglicans found local opposition to their influence increasingly transcended considerations of finance. The opposition to the militant vicar of Harpenden, mentioned earlier, was fired by the spectre of a continuing Anglican monopoly of local schools, and far removed from mere economy. In Baldock, in 1924, the Liberal and Nonconformist alliance, speaking through its majority on the town council, agitated for a new LEA school. Everyone had agreed, including the parish responsible for them, that the Anglican schools needed either serious renovation and expansion, or replacement. The controversy arose over the church's remodelling scheme which would ensure its continuing dominance of elementary education in the town. In one of his first urban campaigns, Furse actively promoted the local Anglican cause, giving it a diocesan dimension which served mainly to stiffen the resolve of the opposition.(112) Those hostile to Church of England influence wanted nothing less than a council central school costing in excess of £15,000, an expensive option compared with the modest Anglican programme of staggered repairs and expansion.(113) Both parties when provoked - as invariably they were at public meetings - revealed that the arguments of sanitation, sites, and even costs, were

subordinate to the greater battle for control of the schools.(114) The LEA and the Board preferred the cheaper solution, and, indeed, no-one in Baldock had much choice as the parish could easily prove its ability to finance the required developments.

By the time of the Hadow Report in 1926, the chances were fast becoming remote that local councils, education sub-committees and Nonconformist groups would prefer absolute economy and an alliance with the Church of England to more extensive, if more costly, educational facilities provided by the LEA, along with a much reduced Anglican presence in schools.

(v)

**"THESE BUILDINGS...WERE EXTREMELY GOOD FOR THE
PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY WERE REQUIRED."**

EARLY LEA RESPONSES TO POST-HADOW REORGANISATION

1927-1931

The Board of Education's Consultative Committee, chaired by Sir Henry Hadow, published its report, The Education of the Adolescent, in December 1926. Its significance was recognised immediately by interested parties locally, and open meetings in the Garden Cities, and professional meetings organised by the HCTA, kept the report in the public eye. The report's recommendations for a "definite break" in education about the age of eleven became an instant shibboleth, but the future status and style of the variety of schools it encouraged for those over that age remained unclear - and indeed they were unresolved in the report itself. Morgan Jones MP received predictable applause in Letchworth for cautioning against early specialisation and selection, and for condemning schemes for older pupils which were "cheap substitutes for the secondary school on the assumption that the children were destined to become hewers of wood and drawers of water." (115) In contrast, Frederick Mander was dismissed as "somewhat idealistic" for saying much the same thing in Hatfield. (116) Dennis Herbert, the Conservative MP for Watford, came much nearer the general Hertfordshire view with his low-key welcome for a greater variety of specifically elementary schools for children over eleven. (117)

The education committee discussed the Hadow report only once throughout 1927. This was in June, and it decided caution was crucial. It would await events, and meanwhile slow down all current reorganisation schemes.(118) Although Percy had stated in January that he expected LEAs to make the running, and that they had all the powers they needed, there was some justification for Hertfordshire's opposing view.(119) There was much public debate over the report's recommendations, and their implications in principle and practice. The triennial building programme for 1927-30 was in operation, and after years of educational uncertainty there could be no certainty that the Board would act seriously and consistently on its Consultative Committee's report. In addition, local opinion in many districts had shown itself to be sharply divided over educational expansion and reorganisation. Indeed, almost as an omen, the LEA now became embroiled as unwilling arbiter in formal public inquiries as a result of well-orchestrated campaigns against Anglican renovation schemes and for the substitution of new well-appointed council schools, first in Aldenham and Radlett, and then in Chipperfield, each of them rapidly growing commuter communities typical of the south-west of the county.(120)

It was September 1928 before the education committee debated the Hadow report again.(121) By then Percy had confirmed that he saw the way forward as not concerned with moves towards greater equality in post-primary buildings, facilities and staff, as Hadow intimated, but with the eradication of Black List defects, the reduction in class sizes, the establishment of junior and senior elementary schools, and the encouragement of four year courses after eleven with a view to raising the leaving age in 1933.(122) Indeed, everything the President said pointed reassuringly to a rationalisation of existing Hertfordshire trends rather than anything unpalatably new and radical. He had loudly praised the current triennial programmes for satisfactorily

pre-empting the Hadow recommendations, and he had quietly assumed the new senior departments and schools would be under the Elementary Code - far less generous than the secondary one.(123) Also a substantial degree of local flexibility would be tolerated, with proposals subject not only "to the general financial situation" but also "to the special difficulties arising in particular areas."(124)

By the autumn of 1928 Howe, the chief education officer, certainly believed that many national problems were of minimal significance locally. By then all 7 Black List "A" elementary schools had been or were about to be replaced. List "B" originally contained 35 schools - 2 provided and 33 non-provided - and Howe was confident the 11 outstanding names, all non-provided schools, would be removed during the current triennial period. The problem of large classes was not great. There were now 18 junior elementary classes exceeding 50 pupils, but 16 of these had just 51 or 52. There were, however, 121 senior classes with over 40 pupils, but Howe believed these would be progressively eliminated as urban reorganisation schemes afforded the LEA the flexibility to rearrange and rebuild schools.(125)

In October 1928 the education committee set up a small Schools Reorganisation Committee (SRC) to consider local needs, and to confer with managers, local councils and local education sub-committees.(126) Its brief was to concentrate first upon the expanding towns - to survey them, and to publish development schemes bearing the government's interpretation of the Hadow report in mind.(127) It was hoped that detailed investigations would reveal that existing elementary school buildings could be used to much better advantage, minimising the need for new works.(128) No-one - Percy, Barnard or Morris - thought there should be any hurry. Certainly the mechanisms of negotiation ensured the voluntary schools had their say, and could stand their

ground. Percy had upheld the desirability of development through cooperation, and Hertfordshire LEA assumed that progress would be very slow as a result, and said so publicly.(129) There was every indication that government policy and local predilections were largely in sympathy, and that the education committee had found sufficient room for manoeuvre within Percy's post-Hadow pronouncements. The question of raising the leaving age illustrates the sort of control committee members desired over county affairs. Far from considering that raising the age by a year would improve educational standards, or even reduce unemployment, they rejected the proposal outright as calculated to increase unemployment by giving potential manual workers aspirations above their likely station.(130) This significant decision was not taken in isolation. It was, of course, part of the hierarchical perspective on education which consistently guided the education committee in its encouragement of practical and vocational education and the development of the rural and urban biases.

A series of related incidents in 1929 sums up both minority and majority views in Hertfordshire. Lord Eustace Percy, on a visit to the county in March, claimed as a virtue the fact his new policy was "not an extravagant one."(131) A week later the incoming president of the HCTA, a radical Letchworth headmaster, sarcastically agreed that "economy pure and simple" governed both the Board's recommendations and the county's actions, which in combination were negating any "real progressive educational policy which will secure real secondary conditions for all schools."(132) He urged teachers to inform parents about the ominous as well as the beneficial implications of current developments.(133) Four local newspapers reported the HCTA conference, at which Sir Edmund Barnard, chairman of the county council, also spoke at length about educational policies. A comparison between the reports suggests that the teachers frequently applauded Barnard, but not their new president. Indeed,

while the bulk of Barnard's speech was reported in the four newspapers, the president's address was emasculated by all except his local Letchworth based Citizen. The implication seems to be that Barnard's speech which eulogised meritocracy and the scholarship ladder, and reassured teachers of their worth at this critical time of reorganisation, was far more in tune with professional and popular opinion than that of the dissident president.(134) Barnard, like Morris, Graveson, and many other county and local councillors, considered the age-related division of elementary education into junior and senior schools as the great conceptual leap forward, and saw the senior schools intensifying rather than departing from traditional elementary practice by developing along practical and vocational lines.(135) In the same year, 1929, one blunt local education sub-committee chairman could not have caricatured the situation more starkly when he welcomed his town's spacious new junior elementary school - it would give pupils, he said, a healthy and active preparation for the break at eleven, and then pass them on to senior schools "where they would be taught practical subjects in the workshops, the cookery schools and the like."(136)

In October 1929, the education committee reviewed the progress of its first triennial programme (April 1927-April 1930) as part of the process of compiling the second one (April 1930-April 1933) for submission to the Board.(137) As usual, Howe was confident and congratulatory, and indeed considerable progress had been made. Three new urban elementary schools had opened, and three more would soon be completed.(138) He gave no statistics, but confirmed that the eradication of all senior classes over 40, and all junior classes over 50, was imminent and that the "majority" of non-provided schools had been removed from the Black Lists.(139) The second triennial programme was compiled with the "definite break" at eleven in mind, but without incorporating village schools or raising the leaving age. Both omissions were, of course, deliberate, due partly to

well-established policies and partly to Howe's confidence that shrewd reorganisation within the existing building plans would obviate the need for further accommodation should the law demand the extra year.(140)

The second programme was much more extensive than the first, and concentrated primarily upon the fast expanding towns in the south and west, and the Garden Cities. It incorporated thirty major projects, but there would be more, Howe warned, if the churches could not meet Board requirements.(141) For 1930-31 seven new elementary schools were proposed, with five existing ones substantially enlarged. Seven more were to be built in 1931-32, and nine in 1932-33, with two more greatly enlarged. Five of these schools were in the borough of Watford, four in St.Albans, three in Letchworth, two in Welwyn Garden City, and one each in Baldock, Barnet, Cheshunt, East Barnet, Elstree, Harpenden, Hatfield, Hitchin, King's Langley, Knebworth, London Colney, Rickmansworth, Royston, Stevenage, Waltham Cross and Ware. (142) The Board accepted the programme, and the point that local growth and church impecunity could lead to expensive amendments.(143) Indeed, the plans were to be as much hostages to economic, demographic and religious fortunes as they were a statement of intent. Nevertheless they were a statement of serious intent, and the county council and education committee had undoubtedly recognised the need for leadership, a sense of urgency, and a heavy investment in elementary education.

During 1929 and 1930 several towns provided proof that the Schools Reorganisation Committee worked fast, planned in detail, and acted with vigour. It did not avoid complex situations, and not surprisingly it met with widely varying responses and degrees of success. In Berkhamsted it anticipated problems, but displayed unprecedented persistence in attempts to resolve them.(144) Every

conceivable difficulty and cross-current existed there. The Church of England schools educated 800 of the 1,000 elementary pupils, but the town possessed a strong Nonconformist minority which was well-represented on the town council, education sub-committee and council school managing body. The principle of a senior school was not disputed, only its site, ownership, and cost. First, Berkhamsted was a cramped town straggling for two miles along the bottom of a narrow, steep-sided valley. Objections were easy to make against each of the few available sites. Second, the dispute over Anglican or LEA ownership of the new school incorporated the whole range of religious and political beliefs, but fundamentally Anglicans and Conservatives were aligned against Nonconformists, Liberals and the local Labour party. Third, cutting across all these issues was the overall cost of reorganisation, an issue involving the questions of sites, facilities, transport and the combatants' preferences for local rates or voluntary subscriptions. The discussions were prolonged, and futile. Managers patched up their schools, and talks collapsed alongside the economy in 1931.(145)

The SRC claimed early and complete success in Hertford, St.Albans, Watford and Barnet, but the nature of these claims throws much light upon local expectations of elementary education even after reorganisation. In Hertford, the long-awaited purchase of the old boys' grammar school in 1930 paved the way for a cheap and speedy reorganisation of elementary education.(146) By September 1931 the borough, the churches, and the LEA considered reorganisation complete.(147) The Roman Catholic school was allowed to stay all-age provided it reorganised internally, the impoverished Anglican schools agreed to survival through decapitation, and the council schools became JMI or, in the case of the old grammar school building, senior schools.(148) Behind the relief of the majority of local and county councillors there lay the deep

dissatisfaction of a minority with the ready acceptance of antiquated school buildings, and especially the purchase of the old grammar school, but most - and most notably Salisbury and Graveson - thought the buildings entirely appropriate educationally as well as financially.(149) At the reopening of the old grammar school, Graveson earned applause for publicly and pointedly reinforcing the argument that "these buildings ... were extremely good for the purpose for which they were required."(150) In marked contrast, some months earlier the grammar school headmaster had asserted, to an accompanying outburst of speech day laughter, that "they would have a fit" if required to return to the old school.(151)

St.Albans' reorganisation, also completed in 1931, was a far larger affair.(152) Here, too, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and council school managers, and the city council and education committee agreed a scheme based largely on the redesignation of existing schools, with one new Anglican and one new LEA senior school.(153) Here, though, it was Frederick Mander who publicly exposed the hollowness of trying to turn the cramped and awkwardly shaped old buildings into senior schools at negligible cost.(154) Howe's reports show science rooms being equipped, but certainly no moves to provide halls, staff rooms, workshops, gymnasias or more extensive playing fields.(155)

Despite the assumptions made by HMI and the Board that Hadow-style reorganisation with the "definite break" at eleven was a sound development, there is evidence that some schemes brought distress in their wake. Watford and Barnet provide two major examples. The worst outbreak of popular hostility was in Watford where a well-coordinated three months' strike by the parents of 110 children began in September 1929.(156) The children were aged under eleven, their all-age school had reopened as a senior school, and

their parents objected to the allegedly ill-conceived scheme in general, and in particular to the dangerous journey to an allegedly inferior school.(157) Significantly, some Labour borough councillors sympathised with the principle of parental choice, but wider Hadow-inspired arguments of educational efficiency prevailed.(158) The Labour President, Sir Charles Trevelyan, and the local Conservative MP, Dennis Herbert, rejected the strikers' petition, and after this the protest collapsed, along with similar strikes in London, under the threat of court action.(159)

The educational advantages of reorganisation were far from clear to many Barnet families, and here the HCTA subsequently agreed that considerable damage had been wrought by the process. In November 1928 the SRC's scheme included the two Anglican schools deciding between themselves which would be a senior school and which a junior.(160) After much protest, discussion, delay and pressure, the parishes made their choice, and in 1932, after various church and LEA building works, the SRC announced reorganisation was complete.(161) 550 of the 1,350 elementary pupils were obliged to transfer schools, 90 parents made written protests, numerous teachers suffered compulsory relocation and two headteachers lost their posts. (162) Particularly significant, however, was the local attitude towards the well-respected Anglican school suffering decapitation. It had established a fine academic tradition, it involved itself in social activities, it possessed a flourishing Old Boys' Association, and many local people deeply resented the curtailment of its work - and continued to do so.(163) The HCTA confirmed the general pessimism in Barnet at this time, its journal lamenting

"The teachers have done all they could to give it [reorganisation] a chance of success, but there is more of misgiving than of enthusiasm in their attitude towards the change. Much of proved worth has been wiped out, and old traditions and associations ignored. 'The old order changeth, yielding place to the new.'

But with the financial thunderclouds all around the horizon the advantages of the 'new' are at present very visionary and problematical."(164)

As so often, Letchworth was the ultimate example of independent thinking, emanating unmistakable signs that no-one in this educationally conscious town thought the government's policy regarding reorganisation very important. As always, the LEA treated Garden City wishes with the greatest respect, despite the vigour which its SRC displayed in promoting urban reorganisation elsewhere. Late in 1928 the town wished to enlarge an overcrowded school, but also to keep it all-age as a convenient service to the neighbourhood. The LEA agreed, and fought the case against the Board which much preferred to ease the problem through a reorganisation of schools on Hadow lines. The LEA won, partly because it took pains to purchase a senior school site to show the Board the apparent orthodoxy of local long-term planning. Although a new council school was built, Hadow-style reorganisation was postponed indefinitely, and over the next few years Letchworth schools evolved spectacularly idiosyncratic arrangements, based primarily upon parental convenience, whereby one school had an internal division at 9, another at 10, and another none at all.(165) In 1931 the Anglicans considered decapitating and enlarging their school, but discussions between the schools led to universal agreement that ten years' time would be soon enough, when the population growth might merit some general reassessment of the situation.(166) Their time scale was not ridiculously far out, for only in 1937 did one of the schools become exclusively senior, and only during 1939 did the imminent prospect of the raised school leaving age lead the rest to adopt a more orthodox classification of infants, juniors and seniors.(167)

(vi)

**"LET US, IN THESE DIFFICULT DAYS, PRAY...WE MAY NOT FAIL
OUR COUNTRY AND OUR GOD."**

**MOUNTING TENSION: THE CHURCHES AND POST-HADOW REORGANISATION
1927-1935**

The essentially conservative and yet independent character of local administration was sufficiently well known in Hertfordshire for Sir Charles Longmore to state confidently at an Anglican church fete in June 1929, and within the context of both the Hadow report and the Labour victory, that

"the County Council would not be a party to any measures which would not help the church schools, and, whatever the policy of the new Government was, they could rest assured it would be carried out in moderation."(168)

Nevertheless, however accommodating seemed the LEA's planned approach, and however devoted the support of the Cecils and county MPs such as Fremantle, the activities of the SRC made Anglicans appreciate the need for more decisive action on their part.(169) The law protected voluntary school managers from any arbitrary decisions of the LEA, but Furse, the clergy and their congregations were only too aware from recent experiences that ranged against them were many Nonconformists chapels, Labour Party branches, and all who believed, irrespective of religious or political creeds, that the state would provide superior educational facilities. Voluntary school managers were unsure of the funds ultimately at their disposal, but aware that time was now against them when reorganisation, renovation and expansion were required - and in urban Hertfordshire in the

1930s these three factors were usually indivisible. As the population pressure grew, the church could, and did, easily look obstructionist as well as obscurantist. These were the last criticisms the LEA itself wished to incur, and therefore despite the sympathy most education committee members displayed towards church schools, events proved their considerable patience was not without limits.

Any Anglican assumptions of privileged treatment were soon shattered. From the outset, the diocese of St. Albans wished to be regularly and formally consulted by the Schools Reorganisation Committee (SCR), a request denied on unrecorded grounds, but presumably as an unwanted interference with LEA business and an unnecessary provocation to other churches.(170) A diocesan policy statement reminding managers of their legal rights and spiritual duties probably did not endear Furse to the LEA at this time. It was part apologia, part defence handbook, and part declaration of war, and aimed as much at the LEA as at the parishes.(171) Anglican schools were defended primarily as bulwarks against "the growing tendency to a purely secular attitude towards life", and, as lasting attitudes were believed to become fixed in adolescence, the diocese strongly advised managers to provide for senior rather than junior children if faced with a choice.(172) Whatever their circumstances, parishes were encouraged to draw upon the greater financial, legal and moral resources of the diocese when faced with negotiations with the SRC. Indeed, to some extent each parish and school was a pawn in a larger game for the diocese expected its sacrifices in areas where church schools were in a minority to be matched by LEA concessions where church schools were dominant.(173) The diocese was well aware of both its tactical strengths and strategic weaknesses, seeing the LEA as an ally only when the local church was in a strong position, and assuming it to be a foe otherwise. Fundamentally the diocesan

campaign was to be akin to a series of opportunist sallies from unevenly prepared and serviced lines of defence.

This was very different to the evolving situation in neighbouring Buckinghamshire and Essex and their respective dioceses of Oxford and Chelmsford. In Buckinghamshire the Diocesan Council of Education worked in close harmony with the LEA in combining the closure, renovation or replacement of the numerous Black Listed non-provided schools with wider pre and post-Hadow urban and rural reorganisation schemes.

(174) Unlike Hertfordshire, a joint LEA-Diocesan sub-committee was established whose regular meetings went a long way to ensuring only viable and agreed schemes for decapitation and senior schools were presented to a wider public for discussion.(175) Again unlike Hertfordshire, the Anglican churches in Buckinghamshire were generally content to refurbish their decapitated elementary schools rather than embark upon ambitious programmes for senior schools, and certainly such a policy suited the LEA with its determined reorganisation programme for both urban and rural districts. In Essex, too, the diocese accepted, with reluctance, the impossibility of financing more than a token number of new senior schools in the light of the Hadow Report, and seemed mollified by the adoption of the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus in council schools.(176) In the event, it supported just three senior school schemes prior to the 1936 Education Act, and one afterwards.(177)

In contrast, Furse frequently appeared as the church militant in his public utterances and writing. The diocese's policy statement was widely publicised, and was a prelude to a prolonged fundraising mission. At the same time, amidst even greater publicity, the diocese sought a revision of the 1904 Agreed Syllabus.(177) For several weeks the situation was tense, as all parties recalled the local acrimony after the 1902 Education Act.(178)

Barnard and Morris, the chairmen of the county council and education committee, demurred, each fearful of igniting the sparks of sectarian controversy already surrounding some urban expansion schemes.(179) Old embers glowed bright when the diocese intimated that the Hertfordshire Congregational Union, a major force in the 1904 debate, had no right of representation as it now possessed no schools. (180) The Free Churches immediately suspected, with some justification, that the Anglicans sought the best of both worlds - control of their own schools where possible, and where not an Agreed Syllabus revised in their favour.(181)

Such incidents led a nervous county council to organise, but studiously avoid, a widely representative standing conference in June 1929. To the education committee's openly acknowledged surprise and relief, the new and rapidly agreed scheme was submitted to it just six months later. (182) Apparently once all parties - Anglicans, Wesleyans, Congregationalists and Baptists - had accepted the Cowper-Temple clause as a guide, they settled down as an increasingly harmonious writing team.(183) Perhaps, however, agreement was quick and easy because in these legalistic circumstances Furse tacitly had to accept parity of interests and common agreement. Whatever the reason, the agreement was too superficial for Anglican comfort. The bishop made only token efforts at commending the end-product, and certainly made no concessions to ecumenicalism at this potentially opportune moment. The very features the Press praised - the "basic facts" presented "clearly and simply without the slightest sectarian bias" - he was soon condemning, repeatedly, as meaningless.(184)

It was the St.Albans Diocesan Conference in June 1929 which set the tone for local Anglican involvement in educational reorganisation for the next decade. The conference was uncompromising in tone, and the Board took due note.(185)

Furse was the driving force, and played relentlessly on fears of a hostile government, resurgent Roman Catholicism, and unsympathetic council schools.(186) A fundraising campaign was launched with a target of £15,000, later raised to £50,000 and then to £80,000, and during the next ten years Furse involved himself in many individual reorganisation battles.(187) His worst enemy, however, was the frequent apathy in his own camp, and he never eschewed moral blackmail, seeing the schools as both a divine and historical trust, and their renovation as a indicator of faith.(188) Furse had to steer an uncomfortable, and sometimes unproductive, course between the interests and sensitivities of all the religious and political groups involving themselves in elementary education. On the one hand he had to identify the virtues of church schools in ways sufficiently striking to arouse fervent support and funds, while on the other hand he needed to avoid not only accentuating the hostility of Labour, Liberal and Nonconformist groups, but also inciting county councillors, headteachers and managers to defend the quality of education in provided schools. Nevertheless, rarely does he seem to have sacrificed the rousing partisan aphorism for the sake of religious harmony.

By the mid-1930s Furse was openly disappointed in parochial efforts to either rebuild their schools or contribute to the diocesan church schools fund. In typical caustic fashion, he commented that the Bolsheviks would leap at the chance to propagate their beliefs five days a week.(189) To some extent, however, the diocese was over-extended. It was running two major campaigns simultaneously, and although the church restoration and church schools appeals were not mutually antipathetic, they were not mutually supportive either, and certainly well-publicised reports of arguments over priorities during several diocesan conferences gave credence to suspicions of a divided and not wholly determined church.(190) In addition, for all the bishop's

forceful speaking, he appeared inconsistent, sometimes contradictory and on occasion uncharitable. He proclaimed education involved the inculcation of Christian virtues, and this necessitated the acquisition of the Christian faith.(191) Few in Hertfordshire contested this claim, but his contempt for undenominational religious instruction and lack of faith in those who taught it, fitted ill with his signature on the revised Agreed Syllabus, and his occasional luke-warm praise for it when diplomacy demanded it. Indeed, one effect of his partisan diatribes was the marked coolness towards his presence at the 1930 HCTA conference, and a week prior to that meeting he felt obliged to deny accusations he had categorised council school teachers as atheist.(192)

Despite the bishop's clear preference for voluntary senior schools, individual parishes differed in their capacity to secure control of them. They became, in fact, the great prize in reorganisation negotiations. The diocese's model senior school was, not surprisingly, in St.Albans itself. Shrewd planning by the SRC, the energy of the abbey dean, and the abbey-city's status, made such enterprises look relatively easy. In 1929 the SRC temptingly proposed a mutually advantageous reorganisation package whereby the city was divided into three districts in such a way that the eight Anglican schools had one district exclusively to themselves.(193) The bishop and dean welcomed "the splendid opportunity" to consolidate their holdings, and, notwithstanding the intervening depression, ensured their showpiece was funded, built and opened by 1934.(194)

There were other Anglican triumphs. Their common features were the absence of rival council institutions, the high educational reputation of the existing schools, the Broad Church nature of their religious instruction, and the energy, popularity and shrewdness of the incumbents.

At Royston the very high standing of the condemned Anglican school, coupled with a press campaign emphasising the LEA's alternative scheme meant a sixpenny rate for the next thirty years, ensured the dynamic vicar had few problems gaining funds for a replacement.(195) The vicar of Wheathampstead ran a similar campaign in similar favourable circumstances with equal success.(196) It is indicative of overlapping interests that while Furse and Morris celebrated the Anglican victory and the retention of the senior pupils, Morris rejoiced also at the relief of the rates.(197)

An even greater Anglican triumph was achieved in Ware, where the Church of England controlled all three schools, with 934 on roll.(198) Between 1929 and 1932 their managers circumvented all jealousies of their monopoly, and criticisms of their unsatisfactory buildings, and survived reorganisation not only unscathed but with reputations enhanced. Pooling resources, the parishes formulated a scheme to renovate and extend their buildings, reorganise them into infant, junior, senior and selective central schools, and place the completely restructured education system of the town under one joint managing body. They launched a successful fund-raising campaign, and gained extensive press, public and industrial support through the sheer coherence of their programme, the obvious lack of religious discrimination, and the equally obvious rate relief.(199) Significantly, Furse altered his speech for this campaign, emphasising the similarities and not the differences between good council and church schools.(200) By May 1930 all parties - managers, HMI, UDC and LEA - had agreed the proposals.(201) Possibly because of the lengthy notice, possibly because the readily agreed and relatively cheap scheme just escaped the depression, there are no recorded complaints at the drastic upheavals in the schools in 1932, and certainly the Nonconformists, like everyone else it seems, gave the revisions their blessing.(202)

Where some or all of these conditions were absent, the Anglican hold on elementary education tended to be loosened at the time of SRC inquiries and negotiations. The cause could be internal Anglican disunity as much as external hostility. In 1929 the SRC wished to convert the large council school in Baldock into a senior school, provided the Anglican school agreed to decapitation.(203) The ensuing year-long debate centred upon issues which frequently not only divided Anglicans and non-Anglicans, but also members within each of these groups. Baldock Anglicans preferred to keep their senior pupils but many demurred at the heavy cost in the light of the Hadow Report and threats to raise the leaving age. Non-Anglicans preferred a council senior school, free from sectarian bias and limited Anglican resources, but feared the heavier burden on the rates.(204) In the end it was the church's financial uncertainty, accentuated by equivocation among its traditional supporters, rather than the hostility inspired by the town council, which induced the parish to override its bishop and agree to decapitation.(205)

More destructive forms of Anglican disunity manifested themselves in other Hertfordshire towns. At Hitchin one parish swiftly accepted the SRC's scheme whereby its school acquired senior status, only to find the school in the town's second parish delaying reorganisation indefinitely by refusing decapitation.(206) The SRC's much grander design for comprehensively reorganising the now contiguous old villages and new estates of Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Wormley, Rye Common and Rye Park foundered for similar reasons. A new centrally sited LEA senior school was proposed, with all the other schools becoming contributory JMIs.(207) Two impoverished voluntary schools instantly capitulated, but the Anglicans in Broxbourne successfully wrecked large scale planning for the remaining inter-war years by optimistically yet interminably seeking funds to renovate and reorganise the three schools they controlled.(208) Their efforts

aroused mounting public hostility towards the educational opportunities being missed, and in the end resulted only in humiliation.

Deep antipathies as well as the River Gade divided the neighbouring Anglican parishes of Abbots Langley and Kings Langley, rendering impotent all other parties interested in reorganisation. If Ware epitomises the constructive power of autonomous and determined Anglican parishes working in harmony, the Langleys epitomise the negative effect of such parochial independence. In 1930, as a matter of urgency, the SRC proposed a new council senior school and the decapitation of all five voluntary schools.(209)

Immediate deadlock ensued as both parishes wanted a senior school of their own. For the next seven years they fought a forlorn battle against the depression, SRC interference and diocesan advice, but most of all each other, until finally overwhelmed by the tide of immigration and the futile and unpopular battles to maintain overcrowded old schools and raise funds for new ones.(210)

Notwithstanding the triumphs, the first half of the 1930s was increasingly critical for the diocese, with pressures mounting from without and within its fold. The LEA was partly the cause as circumstances forced the bit between the SRC's teeth. By 1934 a serious county building backlog had accumulated, and developments in hand were still being exacerbated, sometimes to the point of stultification, by the prolonged negotiations between the churches and county and local education committees. Anglican parishes now began to feel the force of a LEA becoming far less tolerant of delay as immigration obliged increasingly rapid responses to urban educational demands.

Although far from crippled by the depression, the diocese's own educational crusade faltered between 1931 and 1935. Sir Charles Trevelyan's 1930 White Paper proposed LEA grants to impecunious voluntary schools to guarantee the capital work crucial to agreements about district reorganisation schemes. While respecting the honourable intention to resolve numerous impasses, Furse rejected the quid pro quo which reduced managers to advisers of the LEA in the appointment and dismissal of staff.(211) Nevertheless the issue revealed yet again a divided diocese, some clergy asserting that church rights were infinitely preferable to LEA grace, while others considered the financial relief worth the minimal loss of privilege in a fundamentally beneficent county.(212) The momentum of Furse's fund-raising campaign was seriously threatened by both clergy and laity arguing at the 1930 diocesan conference that government action was rendering voluntary giving on behalf of church schools superfluous.(213) The church restoration devotees clearly hoped they would have the fund-raising field to themselves, but Furse carried the day with his often repeated doubts about the beliefs of council school teachers, and contempt for undenominational religious instruction, this time allied with a heady patriotic and partisan appeal that Anglicans "may not fail our country and our God."(214) Nevertheless the diocese could not speak for its individual parishes in these matters. The publication of Trevelyan's scheme, and its incorporation into a series of controversial Bills, frustrated reorganisation agreements in several towns as voluntary school managers and the LEA deferred decisions until the outcome of the prolonged parliamentary debates. With the depression following hard on the heels of the Bills' failure, the ill-fated scheme wreaked considerable damage.

At the diocesan conference five years later Furse boldly stated that the victories achieved and the compromises agreed outweighed the defeats endured.(215) By then a

dozen towns undergoing systematic reorganisation had been targeted for new church senior schools, with local parish efforts bulwarked by diocesan grants totalling £10,000.

(216) In 1935, yet again the bishop unhesitatingly condemned parochial apathy, the enemy in their midst, bluntly charging that

"every Church School surrendered definitely weakened the Christian position in this country, and that every Church School that was neglected spiritually, was a weapon in the hands of those who confused what was meant by Scripture instruction with what was meant by religious education."(217)

Yet again he sought support by unequivocally asserting

"what was needed was denominational teaching - instruction which tended to give a child an intelligent appreciation of a body of truth that was held by a body of believers."(218)

The fact he spent so much time defending such claims indicates he knew he was not preaching to the converted. Indeed, to his obvious annoyance, his speech was deflated by a loquacious critic arguing that church schools were fading fast, and that diocesan efforts would be better directed at creating good relations with Nonconformists and revitalising the Agreed Syllabus.(219)

(vii)

"THE BOTTOMLESS CHASM OF EXTRAVAGANCE"

THE LEA, THE DEPRESSION AND ITS AFTERMATH

1931-1935

In February 1931, for the first time, Hertfordshire's rising rateable value enabled an increased county council budget for the forthcoming year to be accompanied by a reduction in the rates - of 2½d in the pound.(220) It brought little joy. The council chairman, Sir Joseph Priestley, spoke ominously of "living in troubled times", and voiced his resentment that local desires for economy were constantly overridden by government demands - for "school expenditure and that sort of thing."(221) The education committee shared the unease, members feeling trapped between their legal obligations and their rekindled desire for retrenchment. It made little difference to the general mood that their chairman, William Graveson, confessed his "relief that the measure for extending the school age has been postponed", and that the Hertfordshire Mercury reassured readers that reorganisation was being undertaken "in a manner which is least burdensome to the ratepayers" and "at a considerably less cost than our neighbours."(222) The Mercury mentioned no years, but for 1931-32 the claim was nearly correct, if not wholly so, as the elementary education rates were:-

Middlesex	1s 7½d	
HERTFORDSHIRE	1s 10½d	
Buckinghamshire	2s 2½d	
Essex	2s 8d,	
Bedfordshire	3s 4d,	
Cambridgeshire	3s 11d	(223)

The LEA found itself the victim of rapidly changing local and national circumstances, the one dramatically at variance with the other. As the economy worsened, so the county's problems regarding school provision became acute. Local growth continued apace, virtually unaffected by the general recession, and urban demands increased rather than declined. To many, the programmes of capital investment in elementary education always had seemed excessive, but in fact they were the minimum necessary to cater for new areas and for reorganisation. Nevertheless, the calls for cutbacks by government ministers, county councillors, and the public generally, became shrill, persistent, and irresistible, and the second triennial programme fast felt like a millstone hung by the Board around the council's neck. At a national level, the May Committee considered elementary education was now "too good", and urged constriction not expansion.(224) In the Autumn of 1931 Board Circular 1413 reduced grants for teachers' salaries by 10%, terminated all further thoughts of 50% grants for capital building programmes, and required LEAs "to review their expenditure and consider what economies are possible."(225) Hertfordshire, the fastest growing county in the country, with an education development programme barely coping with existing demands, was faced with a dramatic reversal of government policy.

Basically speaking, after the Hadow Report the LEA had taken the view that new towns might require new schools but old towns only merited redesignated old ones. During the depression, however, local building continued apace, and many old towns - St.Albans, East Barnet, Cheshunt, Elstree, Bushey and Hatfield - were now becoming transformed by vast new estates. The need for completely new infant, junior and senior schools in these fast accumulating residential areas became acute, however much hand-wringing was done by panic-stricken county councillors. The education committee as a body remained realistic and cool-headed. It came around to defending its current policies strongly, and to

recommending that very little change was possible to the triennial capital programme. In a significant commentary upon the tensions surrounding elementary school provision at this time, its decisions were hailed as profligate by right wing Conservatives, steadfast by the teachers, and yet hardly adequate by several rapidly growing and militant towns.

With the arrival of Circular 1413, Graveson pointed the finger of responsibility firmly at the Board of Education, but having done so, county councillors were promised immediate acquiescence.(226) Soon afterwards, however, he was confessing the lack of slack in Hertfordshire's staffing ratios, fuel and stationery allowances, and building programme.(227) Despite the restrictions on signing contracts, immigration meant the new elementary schools for St.Albans, East Barnet, Hatfield, Hoddesdon and Rickmansworth could not be postponed.(228) In addition, Graveson had to argue for further sites, and the building of more schools sooner rather than later in St.Albans, Harpenden and Welwyn Garden City.(229) The fact that loan charges were likely to rise as capital grants reverted to 20% made the situation even more exasperating.

In these circumstances the pent-up anger of the county council had to be faced, sympathised with, but ultimately resisted. The educational situation was complicated, but logic was not in abundant evidence - although frequently appealed to - among those subjecting the cost and quality of elementary education to relentless attacks during the winter of 1931-32. There were elements of revenge in the accusations, not least because a major spending department seemed to have passed beyond local control. Furthermore Sir Joseph Priestley, unlike his predecessor Sir Edmund Barnard, displayed little sympathy with elementary education during his lengthy term of office from 1930 to 1939.

Nevertheless, his well-received mild criticism that recent school buildings were "on the excessive side" paled into insignificance beside the repeated applause accompanying Lord Salisbury's impassioned speech to county councillors claiming that their sympathetic attitude towards education had led them inexorably into "the bottomless chasm of extravagance." (230) This mood, of course, was widespread and others outside the county council joined in. The St. Albans Chamber of Commerce, for example, condemned the new elementary schools in the city as excessively large. (231) The press, only a fair-weather friend of elementary education, switched from educational to financial criteria in its judgements, and now deemed all new facilities "beyond the bounds" of efficiency rather than the means of ensuring it. (232) Local headteachers felt no longer obliged to conceal completely their disillusionment with the upheavals of Hadow reorganisation. (233) As though giving conclusive proof of the ineffectiveness of the heavy investment, in January 1932 the results of county-wide tests gave rise, as Howe had to admit, "to some uneasiness" about the grounding of pupils "in fundamental subjects." (234)

The Board proved even more unsympathetic than the county council towards local educational difficulties, and by denying a grant for much-needed new schools in St. Albans and Rickmansworth it sparked the well-primed local tinderbox by seeming to prove the profligacy of the education committee. (235) Gratified but unsatisfied by the Board's decision, Lord Salisbury and Captain Morris - the latter completely out of sympathy with the committee he had recently chaired - successfully appealed to county councillors' latent desires to undo much that recent governments had compelled them to undertake, and by acclamation a Special Expenditure Committee was set up to dig out economies. (236) Ironically, after six months investigation, the Committee had to concede that the education committee's funding of elementary education

generally, and also its programme of reorganisation and expansion, were beyond major criticism. By and large, the desperate need for consistency of approach since the Hadow report, whatever the political and economic climate, was confirmed. It is significant, however, that the Committee issued a majority report and also two minority ones. The majority, led by Salisbury and Morris, found they could do little more than restate current local policies. Thus they recommended reorganisation should proceed only where no expenditure would be incurred, and new schools be erected only where population increases compelled them. They commended the Board's promotion of the lightweight semi-permanent style of school building, although they overstepped the Board's minimum standards in claiming even smaller sites, cheaper modes of construction, lesser space, and fewer facilities, would be perfectly satisfactory for elementary schoolchildren.(237) Between them, the minority reports, one including George Lindgren, the outspoken Labour county councillor, and one comprising just Lindgren himself, rejected everything said by the majority about restricting educational provision.(238)

The episode silenced all charges of extravagance, and, adding insult to Salisbury's imagined injuries, the education committee found itself compelled to agree with many of Lindgren's points.(239) Without a doubt, during the years 1931 to 1933 reorganisation was limited to areas desperately meriting new schools, and therefore in most other towns discussions ground temporarily to a halt. Yet, where new schools were built, the education committee consistently adhered to the view that long-term solutions were preferable to short-term economies, despite the strictures of both the Board and the Special Expenditure Committee's majority report. Large new permanent estates were held to require large new permanent schools, and, after an acrimonious exchange with the Board, the LEA took a policy decision to avoid "light construction" schools as a

false economy.(240) In addition, the county Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee, and indeed the education committee as a whole, considered the signatories of the majority report were blinkered and shortsighted in their condemnation of the more generous modern standards of field, playground and room sizes.(241) Residential development did not slacken, especially in southern Hertfordshire, and despite the difficulties in public sector finance, some new schools had to be built. They were built to last, and accompanied by games fields and full workshop facilities.(242) In 1931-32 the Board allowed work to commence on three new schools - in Hoddesdon, East Barnet and Hatfield.(243) In 1932-33 just two were permitted - in Watford and Welwyn Garden City. (244) As though these years were not lean enough, in September 1932 Circular 1442 stated that for 1933-34 work would be limited to "essential new requirements." (245) By then Hertfordshire had an accumulating backlog, and there were the additional pressures from estates currently under construction, with yet more in the planning stage. Despite the doom laden atmosphere surrounding the Board and the county council, these circumstances compelled the LEA to submit proposals for new schools in Rickmansworth, Harpenden and St.Albans, and for the purchase of more sites in Barnet, Watford and Cheshunt.(246)

The educational situation in two of these towns - St.Albans and Cheshunt - illustrates the extreme pressures faced by the education committee on the eve of the 1936 Education Act. By then the committee had accepted the need to defend its relatively massive building programme as the only means of keeping pace with relentless expansion, and with an air of independence it had set its mind against cheap styles of construction. Nevertheless, another revelation was on the way, as the early rounds of reorganisation were fast revealing the schemes' inadequacies where they had been based upon the redesignation of schools with little

accompanying modernisation. Frederick Mander's criticisms of St.Albans - mentioned earlier on page 241 - had proved well-founded. In 1934 an HMI report on the city formally indicted the severe limitations of many elementary school buildings, and also the rapidly accumulating problems of accommodation caused by educational economies coinciding with the sharp rise in school population from 3,199 in March 1930 to 3,676 in October 1933.(247) Bloom argued that the new estates should have their own junior and infants' schools, and that new district senior schools were essential.(248) His trenchant comments caught the education committee by surprise, but soon afterwards Howe conceded that the city needed a second comprehensive reorganisation scheme.(249) Although the recession was perceived as barely receding, the county council had to accept the well-substantiated arguments of both HMI and CEO for a "long view" of St.Albans' educational needs.(250)

If St.Albans revealed the shattering of county council and city complacency over expansion and reorganisation, Cheshunt epitomised the accumulation of frustrations which could equally easily impede all progress in a burgeoning old established town in the mid-1930s. Both situations were representative of the avalanche of problems which threatened to overwhelm the LEA in 1935. There was a sudden air of desperation as the true extent of urban problems manifested themselves. Unlike St.Albans, all parties in the populous district of Cheshunt and adjoining Goffs Oak and Waltham Cross agreed that educational expansion and reorganisation were sorely needed. However, both features had been long delayed, first by sectarian controversy, then by the hope of aid contained in Trevelyan's Bills, and finally by the recession.(251) In 1933 the SRC tried again, but any sort of comprehensive solution continued to be wrecked by the antipathies aroused by the determination of the Anglican parishes to renovate their six schools, keep the older pupils, and expand their intake.(252) In addition, the

Board now wanted two new district senior elementary schools. (253) As in St.Albans, the LEA finally recognised the dire need for positive leadership and decisive action. The SRC formulated a tacit division of responsibility within the district.(254) One Anglican parish was left to build a new junior school, and another parish one of the two new senior schools. The LEA would build the second senior elementary school and a "modern" secondary school, and all the remaining provided and non-provided schools, except the small Roman Catholic one, would be decapitated.(255) The plan was expensive, it relied on strict catchment areas, it was promulgated by the LEA with vigour, it was received by the churches with sympathy, and it was so long-term it had a decided air of finality about it - and for one or more of those reasons, all the warring parties in the district eventually found they disliked it. Fundamentally the Anglicans hoped for a even greater share in local education, while everyone else wanted them to have a great deal less. The impasse was total and more than merely frustrating; it threatened to leave the district's thirteen schools superannuated in design, inadequate in facilities, archaic in organisation, and rapidly succumbing to the weight of numbers.(256)

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189. BL H&E Observer 2:11:35 p3 col4; Herts Gazette 27:11:37 p3 col2-5.
190. BL Herts Mercury 8:11:29 p4 col5, 16:1:31 p14 cols4-6; Herts Advertiser 23:5:30 p6 cols4-5; Citizen 30:5:30 p9 cols2-3.
191. BL Barnet Press 16:11:29 p4 cols2-3; Herts Advertiser 23:5:30 p6 cols4-5, 17:10:30 p13 col3.
192. BL Herts Advertiser 14:3:30 p8 cols4-5; Herts Mercury 7:3:30 p4 col5.
193. HRO HCC2/127 CP167 HCC Proposed Reorganisation of PES: St.Albans 27:9:29.
194. HRO HCC2/129 CP26 HCC Proposed Reorganisation of PES: St.Albans 21:3:30; BL Herts Advertiser 7:11:30 p7 col3, 24:2:33 p8 col4, 18:5:34 p14 cols1-3.
195. HRO HCC2/125 CP2 SRC 22:2:29 pp16-18; BL H&C Reporter 24:10:30 p2 cols4&7.
196. HRO HCC2/116 CP219 HEC 7:1:27 pp37-39; HCC2/119 CP140 FGPSC 19:9:27 pp16-17.
197. BL Herts Advertiser 13:12:29 p9 col5, 6:5:32 p5 col2; HRO HCC2/133 CP13 FGPSC 13:3:31 p21.
198. HRO HCC2/125 CP2 SRC 22:2:29 pp21-24.
199. BL Herts Mercury 7:3:30 p9 col1, 8:7:32 p7 col3.
200. Ibid., 7:3:30 p4 cols5-6.
201. HRO HCC2/130 CP81 SRC 30:5:30 pp9-11.
202. BL Herts Mercury 26:2:32 p9 cols2-4, 8:7:32 p7 col3.
203. HRO HCC2/125 CP2 SRC 22:2:29 pp2-3.
204. BL Citizen 16:8:29 p2 cols3-4, 20:9:29 p8 cols3-6, 1:11:29 p8 cols4-5.
205. Ibid., 29:11:29 p12 cols1-4, 10:1:30 p8 cols4-6.
206. HRO HCC2/125 CP2 SRC 22:2:29 pp9-11; HCC2/126 CP93 SRC 7:6:29 p13; HCC2/130 CP81 SRC 30:5:30 pp3-6; HCC2/131 CP152 SRC 12:9:30 pp8-15; HCC2/132 CP209 FGPSC 15:12:30 pp35-37; BL Herts Express 21:11:31 p5 col4.
207. HRO HCC2/125 CP2 SRC 22:2:29 pp11-14.
208. BL Herts Mercury 17:1:30 p7 cols1-2; HRO HCC2/126 CP93 SRC 7:6:29 pp13-16.

209. HRO HCC2/132 CP205 SRC 28:9:30 pp12-15.
210. HRO HCC2/135 CP140 SRC 18:9:31 pp6-9; HCC2/137 CP36 HEC 8:4:32 pp26-28; HCC2/146 CP85 HEC 22:6:34 pp8-9; HCC2/152 CP175 HEC 17:1:36 pp33-34; BL WH Observer 1:8:31 p8 cols3-6.
211. BL Herts Advertiser 16:5:30 p8 cols4-5.
212. Ibid.
213. BL Citizen 30:5:30 p9 cols2-3; Herts Advertiser 23:5:30 p6 cols4-5 & p7 cols1-4.
214. BL Herts Advertiser 23:5:30 p6 col5.
215. BL Herts Advertiser 1:11:35 p6 cols3-4; H&E Observer 2:11:35 p3 col4.
216. Ibid., and Furse, op cit pp127-129.
217. BL Herts Advertiser 1:11:35 p6 col4.
218. Ibid.
219. Ibid.
220. BL Herts Mercury 20:2:31 p12 cols4-6.
221. Ibid.
222. Ibid., and 17:3:31 p9 col1.
223. HRO HCC2/135 CP168 HEC 2:10:31 p2.
224. BL Herts Advertiser 18:9:31 p6 cols3-4.
225. HRO HCC2/135 CP141 FGPSC 18:9:31 pp1-2; BL Herts Advertiser 9:10:31 p5 col4. 4
226. BL Herts Express 10:10:31 p8 col4.
227. HRO HCC2/135 CP168 HEC 2:10:31 pp2-4.
228. Ibid.
229. Ibid.
230. BL Herts Mercury 6:11:31 p13 cols1-4; Herts Advertiser 6:11:31 p7 cols1-4.
231. BL Herts Advertiser 6:5:32 p7 col3.
232. BL H&E Observer 7:11:31 p4 col6.
233. BL Barnet Press 16:7:32 p7 col1; Herts Advertiser 24:7:31 p8 col5; Herts Gazette 25:7:31 p3 cols4-5.

234. BL Herts Express 23:1:32 p4 col7. The tests had been conducted during 1931 after persistent complaints about standards from local employers.
235. HRO HCC2/137 CP36 HEC 8:4:32 pp9-10.
236. BL Herts Advertiser 13:5:32 p6 cols1-3.
237. HRO HCC2/140 CP171 HCC Report of the SEC 22:12:32.
238. Ibid.
239. BL Herts Advertiser 24:2:33 p8 col1.
240. BL WH Observer 27:1:34 p7 col1 & p9 cols1-3.
241. HRO HCC2/141 CP24 HEC 7:4:33 pp2-11; BL Herts Advertiser 13:4:33 p11 cols3-4.
242. HRO HCC2/143 CP128 HEC 6:10:33 pp5-30.
243. HRO HCC2/139 CP131 HEC 10:10:32 pp1-2.
244. Ibid.
245. Ibid.
246. Ibid.
247. PRO ED19/379 B of Ed Administrative Report on St.Albans 1934 pp4 & 19.
248. Ibid., pp12-14 & 18-21.
249. HRO HCC2/146 CP72 CEO Report as to PES: City of St.Albans 23:7:34.
250. Ibid, and PRO ED19/379 B of Ed Administrative Report on St.Albans 1934 p20.
251. HRO HCC2/132 CP205 SRC 28:11:30 pp1-5; HCC2/133 CP9 SRC 6:3:31 pp5-8; HCC2/134 CP78 SRC 15:5:31 pp2-5; HCC2/135 CP140 SRC 18:9:31 pp5-6; HCC2/136 CP196 FGPSC 14:12:31 pp16-17; BL Herts Mercury 9:10:31 p11 cols4-5
252. BL W.Telegraph 29:9:33 p3 cols1-2, 28:12:34 p5 cols2-3; HRO HCC2/143 CP128 HEC 6:10:33 pp20-21.
253. HRO HCC2/143 CP128 HEC 6:10:33 pp5-12; PRO ED97/114 B of Ed internal interview memorandum 22:6:34.
254. HRO HCC2/149 CP29 HEC 5:4:35 pp23-24; HCC2/150 CP76 HEC 21:6:35 pp19-22 & 29-30; BL W.Telegraph 29:11:35 p7 cols1-2.
255. HRO HCC2/152 CP175 HEC 17:1:36 pp19-23.
256. BL W.Telegraph 29:11:35 p7 cols1-2, 27:3:36 p7 cols1-2, 17:9:37 p5 cols3-4.

CHAPTER SIX

THE 1936 EDUCATION ACT AND AFTERWARDS

(1)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the ways in which the 1936 Education Act represented the apogee of developments in education for most people in Hertfordshire. Amidst great controversy, the Act raised the school leaving age to fifteen, with effect from September 1st 1939, but allowed exemptions at fourteen for employment adjudged by the LEA to be "beneficial" to the child. Of greater significance to Hertfordshire was the immediate provision for LEAs to enter into "special agreements" with managers of voluntary schools, whereby grants between 50% and 75% of the capital costs could be made towards the enlargement and improvement of existing schools, or the building of new ones, for senior elementary pupils.(1) The Act therefore created the momentum for the lingering impediments to district reorganisation schemes to be overcome, and in doing so relieved ratepayers of a considerable financial burden. By being enacted just when immigration attained new heights of intensity in the south of the county, the legislation had all the appearances of divine intervention - an allusion made by the chairman of the county council himself.

The Act paved the way for a new relationship to be established between the LEA and voluntary school managers,

in which the balance of power between the partners in the Dual System was altered dramatically. At the same time, by encouraging the Diocese of St. Albans to build a scattering of new senior schools it revealed that old rivalries were far from dead, and restoked the furnaces of sectarian controversy to an intensity last seen blazing around the 1902 Education Act. The widespread religious antipathies were accompanied by the polarisation of political opinion locally around the vexed question of voluntary schools. After 1936, when particularly extensive reorganisation schemes were proposed, each embracing large conurbations and sometimes more than a dozen schools, the opposition to Anglican aspirations and efforts comprised a powerful alliance of Nonconformists, Liberals and Labour supporters. The new standards of accommodation and the enhanced grants gave local people the impression that the final chapter in educational reform was under way, and this very sense of permanence intensified the efforts of both the Anglican church and its opponents. On top of this, the Education Act gave all local parties - the churches and the LEA - a limited period in which to submit proposals to the Board. In Hertfordshire the combination of the backlog of blocked schemes and the expanding population rendered haste imperative, obliging the LEA to break the habit of its lifetime, and take a far more dominant role in educational affairs, not least by treating many local district councils and education sub-committees as well as the Anglican church with considerably less patience than hitherto.

Within this context, the later 1930s also witnessed the LEA struggling to maintain some of its most treasured policies relating to elementary education. It suffered just one major defeat - over its persistent refusal to develop nursery education as a means of social relief. The circumstances surrounding this episode revealed the power of local pressure groups, the alacrity with which the Board was prepared to intervene in county affairs at this time, and

indeed, ultimately, the skill with which the LEA adjusted to new situations.

In other significant areas, legislation and directives notwithstanding, old attitudes exercised considerable influence over developments. The stubbornness with which the education committee resisted all attempts to persuade it to reduce exemptions under the terms of the 1936 Act to the minimum, and the vigour with which it established the administrative machinery to process exemption applications, highlighted the limited and essentially vocational view of elementary education retained by the great majority of members to the end of the period.

The same attitudes had kept as narrow as possible the scholarship ladder from the elementary to secondary sector. This policy met with little opposition, and indeed secured considerable support. The years after 1936 witnessed the opening of several new senior elementary schools, and the planning of several others. They conformed to the unprecedentedly high standards laid down by the Board in 1936 in Pamphlet 107.(2) Commentators frequently compared the buildings and facilities favourably with secondary schools, and the education committee was undoubtedly proud of its senior school building programme. Nevertheless, such fortuitous similarities served to mask the real and lingering differences between the educational sectors in Hertfordshire. At senior school opening ceremonies and prize-givings education committee members and officers graciously acknowledged the similarities while studiously ignoring the differences, but the major indicator that those differences remained close to most of their hearts was the fact that the percentage of elementary pupils gaining county scholarships to secondary schools remained barely more than half the national average.

(ii)

"..SUICIDE WITHIN TWO GENERATIONS"

THE LEA, THE CHURCHES & THE SPECIAL AGREEMENTS

In 1936 Hertfordshire faced accelerating immigration, and numerous reorganisation schemes either paralysed by disagreements or overtaken by events, or both. That July, however, the Education Act provided the mechanisms for the LEA to overcome some of these impediments. Prized above all were the new powers to enter into the "special agreements" with voluntary school managers.(3) In return for the new enhanced grant, the Act brought voluntary school teachers under the control of the LEA, although the managers would have a right to determine the fitness of an agreed number of "reserved" teachers to take responsibility for religious education in accordance with the school's syllabus.(4) The Board required the voluntary schools to reach agreement with the LEA, and submit applications for the grants, by March 1st 1938.(5) The Act, although calculated to encourage voluntary schools to commit themselves to building works, was meant to expedite decisions one way or the other. In practice it substantially altered the balance of negotiating power in favour of LEAs, and in Hertfordshire the education committee, hard-pressed itself, lost no time in subjecting urban Anglican parishes to considerable pressure.

The LEA used its powers with speed and precision. The SRC formulated new schemes incorporating both council and church schools, it renewed negotiations where they had broken down, and it made tempting offers to the diocese and local

parishes - but with a sense of urgency and strict deadlines. It used its new powers of financial persuasion to match the maximum grants of 75% with large new church senior schools capable of accomodating three streams, thereby avoiding the need for competing council schools in the same districts. In addition, the new church schools had to be substantially built - "comparable with those erected by the County Council" - and conform with Pamphlet 107 which upheld all senior schools should have a central hall, craft workshops, science laboratories, and domestic economy rooms.(6) The LEA asserted that local pressures obliged all schemes which involved the new grants to church senior schools to be decided by March 31st 1937; it would support no applications after that date.(7) The result was distinctly encouraging to the education committee, and by October 1936 Howe could say "seven or eight" large scale agreements with the diocese of St.Albans and local parishes were likely.(8)

The ability of the LEA to exploit the situation had been feared by Furse, and his abiding concern was an irrevocable erosion of the religious influences provided by Anglican schools. In March 1936, just prior to the Act, he had envisaged a very different partnership to the one actually espoused by the LEA. He argued the government should match its moral and financial support of church schools with greater trust in their teachers and teaching. He opposed vehemently any encroachment of the LEA upon staff appointments, claiming such moves placed the Anglican spirit in schools seriously at risk, and condemning the growing lack of Christian fellowship among the young as "the natural outcome of Undenominational Christian teaching." (9) His diatribe was without discernable effect, and although the dean and the diocesan director of education spoke equally vehemently, the diocese and the parishes eventually ended up doing what one local editor had calmly prophesied at the time of the bishop's outburst - namely, seeking to match the highest possible percentage grant with

the highest possible number of reserved teachers.(10) Usually reserved teachers included the headteacher and between two-thirds and three-quarters of the remaining staff other than the practical subjects instructors.(11)

In June 1937 the county education committee gave provisional approval to all the schemes submitted. These involved eight new Church of England senior elementary schools, and substantial enlargements at a further two Anglican and three Roman Catholic schools.(12) Four of the new Anglican schools were agreed as integral features of belated urban reorganisation schemes in Berkhamsted, Bishop's Stortford, Cheshunt and Radlett. At Offley, Tring, Watton and Welwyn existing rurally-biased senior departments would be replaced by new schools, each serving a wider area than hitherto. The two Anglican schools to be enlarged were in Hatfield and Hitchin. The Roman Catholic schools were in Barnet, Puckeridge and Waltham Cross. Throughout the inter-war years the LEA accepted without argument the Roman Catholic decision to keep their seven schools all-age. As mentioned in Chapter Five regarding Hertford, St.Albans and Watford, these schools were quietly incorporated into post-Hadow reorganisation schemes as anomalies.(13) The intransigence of this small minority interest was not perceived by any other party as a threat worth contesting, and their special treatment incited no opposition. The tacit agreement was the Roman Catholic schools would gradually reorganise themselves internally into junior and senior departments, and the new enhanced grants in 1936 were technically limited to building works on behalf of the senior pupils.(14)

In the event, only the new Anglican schools in Cheshunt, Berkhamsted, Tring and Bishop's Stortford were planned as three or more streams in size, but all the proposals were given 75% grants by the LEA - which, of course, could reclaim 50% of that amount back in Treasury grants.(15)

Thus, out of the total cost of these schools, 25% was paid by the churches, 37½% by the Treasury, and 37½% by ratepayers. Local ratepayers therefore contributed 12½% less than if these schools were built or enlarged by the LEA and gained the standard 50% grant.

The LEA's agreements with the Church of England were provisional, and although to some extent they fulfilled Anglican aspirations, they were very much the result of LEA initiatives and direction. In August 1937 the Archdeacon of Hertford and the diocesan secretary visited the Board to complain at the LEA's insistence upon comparable buildings standards and bankers' guarantees. Already, the archdeacon confessed, eight new schools seemed beyond Anglican resources, and he argued that as it was the LEA which had advocated this new pattern of Anglican schools across the county, it should allow cheaper buildings and impose less immediate financial demands.(16) Board officials expressed little sympathy with such special pleading. They demurred at thoughts of inferior buildings, and at interfering in local negotiations which they acknowledged seemed rather rigorous on the LEA's part, but, they believed, had not exceeded permissible limits.(17) Indeed, the interview seems to have raised and confirmed in Board eyes the need for the LEA to distinguish clearly between rhetoric and reality in its dealings with such an ambivalent diocese.

In public, the fervour with which the diocese embarked upon a renewed fund-raising campaign spoke of the undoubted commitment of both the bishop and dean to church schools, and their recognition that the dire alternative to successful agreements with the LEA was probably, in the dean's words, "suicide within two generations."(18) The Education Act was perceived by such protagonists as much as an ultimatum as an opportunity, a perspective given credence by the way the LEA was using the legislation. The dean was

C.C.Thicknesse, who had been appointed recently in full knowledge of his reputation within the Church of England and at the Board of Education, through his work at the National Society, as a traditionalist in religious instruction and an aggressive defender of church school rights.(19) In the highly charged atmosphere of the 1937 diocesan conference, delegates voted not only to support Furse and Thicknesse, but also to ensure the Anson bye-law excusing pupils for important denominational services was put to work in council schools.(20) A target was set of £77,693 over three years, which bishop and dean agreed took precedence over all other diocesan needs.(21)

Furse had remained uncompromising. In a scathing indictment of "the results of sixty-seven years of undenominational religious instruction" his aims were nothing less than rearming the Anglican schools so they could, first, counter the

"growing disregard of the primary duty of Christian worship",

second, challenge the

"widespread revolt against any form of institutional religion as something which must necessarily be narrower in outlook, more intolerant in practice, and less Christian in spirit than undenominationalism",

and third, stem the

"increasing ignorance of the Bible ... and the meaning of the Christian faith among the younger generation of parents and their children."(22)

In public, the chairman of the education committee, William Graveson, spoke in glowing terms of the "special agreements" as proof that religious harmony reigned between Anglicans, Nonconformists and the LEA.(23) They were, he expounded, the culmination of a policy of "give and take", exemplified already by Ware and Broxbourne where all the children attended church schools, and their neighbouring towns of Hertford and Hoddesdon where all the schools were now

council owned.(24) The varied fate of the post-1936 Hertfordshire special agreements reveals the dichotomy in the diocese's position. It possessed undoubted rights, but it claimed more than its declining strength and influence was perceived to merit by the LEA, or by most sectors of public opinion. The besieged Anglican response to LEA initiatives combined grandiose claims with inadequate finance, and exposed the diocese's vulnerability when it had to effect a compromise with the public body whose religious education policies it professed to despise. In addition, at the time of the diocese's need for negotiating strength, Hertfordshire education committee found itself not only blessed with financial reserves and high rateable values, but also with a large measure of statutory control over its discussions with voluntary bodies. In the circumstances, talk by Graveson - a Quaker, openly sympathetic with the undenominational religious instruction treated so contemptuously by the Anglicans - of "mutual co-operation and good fellowship" undoubtedly had something of the confidence of the generous victor about it.(25)

With February 28th 1938 as the deadline for bankers' guarantees, the diocesan campaign for its senior schools gained increasing momentum and encountered increasing opposition, each factor fuelling the other.(26) The difficulties experienced in some towns showed the haste with which decisions had been reached. The Bishop's Stortford agreement was probably the one most ill-judged by the diocese when determining targets for its central funds. It relied on the corporate action of eight disparate parishes and their school managers, and it foundered because local interest and parochial harmony fell drastically short of diocesan hopes and expectations. Inadequate research had been conducted into the jealousies between Bishop's Stortford and its smaller neighbour, Sawbridgeworth, whose families, schools and parishes were determined not to lose their older pupils to the more dominant town.(27) After

this debacle, the three parishes in Bishop's Stortford then suffered an embarrassing failure to incite interest in an independent fund-raising campaign.(28)

Indeed there was a marked reluctance in both these market towns for any expenditure on any new school. For once, however, this was not due to overt hostility to the churches, but, as Captain Morris, who farmed locally, explained at a UDC meeting in 1939, these towns considered themselves part of a rural community, not an urban one, and therefore were content to do without a large central senior school of any description.(29) In a subsequent acerbic assessment of recent trends generally, but with particular reference to country towns such as Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth, Morris argued that as the facilities and the curriculum of the new senior elementary schools now aped those of secondary schools, they were increasingly unsuitable for the children they were intended to teach.(30) The rural bias in the ex-chairman's comments was calculated to appeal to the education committee, and certainly the urban district of Bishop's Stortford successfully avoided reorganisation throughout the inter-war years.

In contrast, the 1936 Education Act neatly resolved problems in and around Tring. The urban schools had been reorganised in 1931, the Church of England school providing a distinct senior department for this small town.(31) Although its managers could not afford to cooperate, in the early 1930s the Board had wished the senior school to take the older pupils from the surrounding village schools.(32) The area grew only slowly, the church school's senior department was popular, and for several years the LEA had no interest in wider district reorganisation. Nevertheless by 1936 expansion was clearly necessary, and when HMI Bloom and the SRC reactivated the Board's earlier plans the new financial incentives ensured swift agreement by Tring's

Anglican managers. Funds were swiftly raised, and by mid-1938 plans for a new senior elementary school were well under way - although the war was to render them void.(33) Certainly the Anglican status of the new school contributed to the ready acquiescence of the surrounding Anglican village schools to decapitation, and as the church senior school managers gladly gave their school a strong rural bias the education committee no doubt considered this "special agreement" very satisfactory financially and educationally. At Welwyn, similar cooperation among several Anglican parishes, all with voluntary schools, ensured an amicable reorganisation centred upon a new 400 place rurally-biased special agreement senior school.(34)

In the larger towns of Cheshunt and Berkhamsted, where the question of reorganisation of a polygot collection of council and voluntary schools had fired religious and political antipathies for eight years, the 1936 Act ignited confrontations unprecedented in bitterness in the inter-war years. In June 1937 an Anglican senior school for Cheshunt was formally accepted by the county council as part of a "special agreement."(35) The outcry was immediate and without respite. Amidst great publicity the Anglicans raised funds, their opponents petitioned the LEA, and both sides argued violently at public meetings.(36) As the campaigns proceeded, it became obvious that the determined opposition was led by the majority group of Nonconformist urban district councillors, at least some of whom belonged to the Liberal or Labour Parties as well, and that no holds were barred. It was equally obvious they had overwhelming public support, partly on religious grounds, partly because the site for the church senior school was inconvenient, and partly because of a popular perception that even new church schools would be inferior in facilities to council ones.(37) When the LEA rejected the petitions, the UDC accused it of complicity with the Anglican church in preserving inadequate schools and doctrinal teaching against the clearly expressed

wishes of the local community.(38) Local district autonomy had finally gone too far for the county education committee. Irritated at the dangerous charge of conspiracy with the Anglicans, Graveson treated the objectors with barely concealed hostility. In a rare acid statement, clearly for public consumption, the UDC was told it had overstepped its responsibilities, the town had been generously treated regarding new and extended schools, and the LEA could not renege on its agreement with the diocese.(39)

In Berkhamsted, with a diocesan grant of £10,000 and a major fund-raising campaign behind them, the Anglican parishes combined to provide the financial guarantees for a senior school in January 1938, a month before the time limit.(40) Here, too, the Nonconformists and Liberals were determined to stem resurgent Anglicanism. Indicative of the impact of the widespread and sustained opposition were the new and obvious public attempts by Furse and other clergy to allay Nonconformist fears of doctrinal teaching. In a significant statement at the Annual Parochial Meeting in February 1937 the hitherto partisan rector of Berkhamsted now redefined "the best in education" as

"definite religious teaching which is given in accordance with parents' wishes, whether they be Church or Chapel."(41)

Next he made the volte face explicit, asserting -

"I would give Chapel people the fullest opportunity to teach their own children in our schools, but it can't be done in State provided schools. That is why our voluntary schools are worth everything that we can do to keep them in the very forefront of our educational system."(42)

Other incumbents echoed the sentiment, and the change was too general and too sudden to be anything other than a reconsidered diocesan policy in the face of concerted opposition.(43) Furse's public conversion was absolute, and in many speeches, articles and letters he sought to separate the sectarian and political wings of the opposition through appeals to all Christians to support church schools

as bastions of fellowship and faith in an age of secularism at home and totalitarianism abroad.(44) In typical bluff fashion he upheld

"he would welcome as Bishop of the Diocese, any Nonconformist who wanted to go into school and teach their children. He would say good luck to him and give him every facility."(45)

If successful, such rough wooing would have split the Nonconformist-Liberal-Labour opposition to Anglican plans in several Hertfordshire towns. However, it came far too late to be convincing, and in 1938 the hostile alliances forced Board of Education public inquiries in both Berkhamsted and Cheshunt. The cross-examinations unearthed the deeply held Nonconformist convictions which rendered all arguments about the quality of secular education in Anglican schools immaterial. Witnesses openly blamed the 1936 Education Act for fuelling the fires of sectarian controversy by tempting the Anglicans to recapture past glories.(46) These convictions, based upon freedom of educational choice and freedom from religious indoctrination, were widespread enough to threaten one scheme and lead to the termination of the other.

In Berkhamsted the Church of England reasserted its traditional claim to continue educating the majority of local children; its opponents based their appeal on the lack of choice of schools, and the principles that religious instruction should be unsectarian and that public elementary schools should be under public control.(47) In Cheshunt the Anglican scheme was defended as providing a secular education equal in quality to any council senior school, and as giving doctrinal instruction to those who desired it.(48) As in Berkhamsted, the Cheshunt promoters had made provision for undenominational teaching, and for ministers of other churches to take groups withdrawn from Anglican lessons.(49) The opposition in Cheshunt preferred practical issues to

principles, asserting that Church of England adherents represented a small minority of the parents obliged to use the new senior school, that the insidious pressures and atmosphere of a church school was tantamount to indoctrination, and that the older church schools locally desperately needed the money collected for the new building.(50)

The Board dealt in legalities only, and the judgements showed no signs of being influenced by those religious and political factors local witnesses thought ought to govern development plans. In Berkhamsted the Board accepted the special agreement represented the broad continuity of Anglican provision and rejected the protest. In Cheshunt, to Anglican astonishment, the special agreement was overturned, the Board deeming the closure of the senior department in a council school as a direct result of the new voluntary school proposals both unnecessary and illegal.(51)

Throughout 1939 the parish of Cheshunt made determined efforts to negotiate a compromise solution, but after the prolonged, bitter and spectacularly successful opposition to the Anglicans and the special agreement, the county education committee overtly distanced itself from any involvement with this defeated, unpopular, yet still militant local group.(52) A few weeks before the outbreak of war, the LEA defied all ecclesiastical protests and took a final decision to build its own three-stream senior school.(53) Although the LEA's attitude towards local Anglican churches seemed inconsistent after 1936 - radically so when Cheshunt and Tring are compared - the varied relationships are all evidence that the 1936 Education Act, combined with rising local rateable values, resurgent sectarian interests, and vociferous political minorities, had severely diminished the Church of England's bargaining position. In Tring and Welwyn it suited the LEA to encourage the peaceful fulfilment of special agreement schemes; in Cheshunt, ultimately, it did not.

(iii)

"...THIS REACTIONARY, ANTI-EDUCATIONAL, UNDEMOCRATIC BODY"

THE LEA & THE INITIATIVES IT CHOSE NOT TO TAKE

The "special agreements" had a major impact upon Hertfordshire, but equally significant were the Board's Circular 1444, issued in January 1936, and the Amending Grant Regulation No7 three months later, which in effect complemented the 1936 Act by increasing the grant for council school building from 20% to 50%.(54) This new grant, too, was subject to a strict time limit. In September 1935 the county education committee had agreed its capital programme for 1936-37, involving the erection of 10 new urban elementary schools and the enlargement or refurbishment of several others.(55) At the same meeting another 8 new schools were agreed for 1937-38.(56) It was by far the largest educational building programme the committee had witnessed, largely because it incorporated items delayed from previous years as well as those latterly forced upon the LEA by new estates. Then, in October 1937, the educational budget for 1938-39 passed £1,000,000 for the first time after hovering beneath this psychological barrier for the past two years.(57) Six new senior schools and eight junior or infants schools were to be built, and six senior schools and six junior or infants' schools substantially improved.(58) The newspapers made the most of this long-expected seven-figure sum, but acknowledged that most items would qualify for the 50% grant, and that rate increases in nearby counties were far worse than Hertfordshire's additional 2½d.(59) Indeed, in 1938-39

comparative elementary education rates were:-

Surrey	1/9d	
HERTFORDSHIRE	1/11d	
Middlesex	1/11½d	
Buckinghamshire	2/2d	
Kent	2/9½d	
Essex	3/1½d	
Bedfordshire	3/7½d	
Cambridgeshire	4/7½d	(60)

Although Graveson voiced resentment at government haste and pressure, and concern at declining local autonomy, after 1936 the LEA undoubtedly basked in almost continuous public and press approval of both the educational advance and the comparatively low rates.(61)

The new programme, and its endless additions, created a new atmosphere within county administration. There evolved a new ambivalence towards elementary education. Although economy remained the public watchword, and maximum LEA autonomy remained the ambition, some old anxieties were fading. With regard to finance, the income from both Treasury grants and a penny rate were soaring. Indeed, despite the accelerating building programmes, the steadily climbing rateable values had allowed Hertfordshire's elementary education rate to remain at 1s 8½d from 1933 until 1938.(62) Certainly this prosperity had cushioned local ratepayers from the worst effects of government stringency during the depression. In addition, some campaigns had been won. With regard to vocational education in particular, the government had accepted the need to encourage technical and agricultural education, and local schemes were expanding apace.

Nevertheless there was a distinct unease - a sense that the times were "out of joint" - among county councillors and education committee members. They believed the LEA and the ratepayers were the victims of the centralisation of power by the Board. They drew little comfort from stable rates when, but for government demands for higher standards of

elementary school provision, they could have been reduced. Above all, the towns were perceived as a mixed blessing. They might be the major source of local wealth, but their educational needs were never-ending at a time when new schools were broadening in concept and costs, and when their construction served to highlight the inadequacies of older schools elsewhere in the district. The towns were also eroding the countryside both literally and figuratively. Their educational developments, especially their reorganisation schemes, drew attention to the deliberate avoidance of similar schemes in rural areas. Urban growth had brought London to the Hertfordshire doorstep, and the towns harboured the growing Labour minority, the zealous reformers, the questioners of educational assumptions, and, inexorably, as the towns expanded they merited greater representation in county and, therefore, educational affairs. It was at this time, as mentioned much earlier, that the decision was taken to build a new county hall. Although feeling besieged, the county council never lost its pride in administering public affairs, but the decision possibly reflected, as the chairman hinted, the need to establish a symbol of local independence as much as the provision of rooms for the more efficient execution of government policies.(63)

William Graveson, chairman of the education committee throughout the 1930s, epitomised the mood of councillors. In 1935, for example, he reminded members the Treasury grant had declined from 50% to 44% of total educational expenditure during the depression, but with manifest pride he emphasised that LEA prudence, healthy budget surpluses and rising rateable values had meant stable rates despite increased costs.(64) Throughout the second half of the decade the LEA's record of economy was frequently compared with government profligacy, or what was worse in local eyes, the government's encouragement and enforcement of LEA profligacy. It was not, of course, the greater proportion

of government assistance towards the provision of new elementary school places which county councillors criticised, it was the obligatory luxury surrounding those places which many considered unnecessary. In 1936 the surge of expenditure planned for both immediate needs and long term eventualities aroused Lord Salisbury and Captain Morris to fulminate once again against the extravagant standards demanded in elementary school buildings, the excessive breadth of the elementary school curriculum, and the futile lengthening of elementary school life.(65) As always, their criticisms were politely received, but the supporting statements from colleagues and newspaper editors were few and brief, indicating such comprehensive class-ridden arguments were perceived, however reluctantly, as totally anachronistic.(66) Nevertheless, the LEA remained proud of its independence and its consistency in policies. It retained a determination to be highly selective in its initiatives whenever possible, and in these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that while the education committee recognised the need to take advantage of the special agreement clauses and the enhanced county school grants, it also exercised its right to resist all expenditure in significant non-mandatory areas of education.

In the mid-1930s, for example, there was little opposition to the LEA's firm rejection of any thoughts of unilaterally raising the school leaving age, and local editors agreed with the argument that full local employment made it unnecessary.(67) In 1936, however, the HCTA used the full employment figures to make a powerful case against the LEA allowing exemptions under the terms of the Education Bill. Firstly, the high demand for juvenile labour locally would "render the Bill, as far as raising the age is concerned, ineffective", secondly, the diversity of occupations locally would make a consistent interpretation of "beneficial employment" virtually impossible, and thirdly, the local education sub-committees could not be trusted to operate the

scheme even-handedly.(68) Finally, the education of numerous children would be curtailed, threatening also the viability of class sizes for those remaining to complete the extra year.(69) Similar petitions were sent by the Watford NUR and Hatfield Labour party.(70) Newspaper leader writers concurred, as part of their new policy of praise for all educational progress provided the rates did not increase.(71) From the outset, however, Graveson openly disagreed, and the education committee ensured all the Board's recommendations regarding preliminary surveys and administrative procedures were acted upon as soon as they were circularised to LEAs.(72) The LEA's policy never changed - for the vast majority of elementary school children the summation of their education was a local job as soon as pupils and parents thought fit and the law allowed. In 1938 the chief education officer estimated that 50% of the 5,000 annual school leavers would apply for certificates with a good chance of success, a figure encouraging education committee members to have the exemption mechanisms in place well in time, rather than worrying them that it might add lustre to the HCTA's case.(73)

In April 1936 George Lindgren, the leader of the Labour group of county councillors, used the debate on Circular 1444 and its requirement for a new programme of educational development, to highlight the neglected but controversial area of nursery education.(74) He was well aware that since the late 1920s local groups had sought LEA assistance with the provision of nursery schools, either to extend mainstream elementary education or to compensate for inadequate parents in particularly poor districts.(75) These groups had come up against an education committee opposed to such schools at all costs for whatever reason. The ensuing conflict lasted throughout the 1930s, and reveals the determination with which the LEA could defuse pressure, deflect criticism, delay decisions and frustrate local district initiatives when confronted with proposals it

knew to be non-obligatory, considered to be without merit, feared as setting a precedent, and suspected of pandering to Labour ideologies or a feckless clientele, or both.

In December 1929 the Ministry of Health and Board of Education joined forces to urge LEAs to consider the provision of nursery schools in socially deprived areas, and the chief education officer, Howe, reported that parts of Watford, St.Albans and Cheshunt probably fulfilled the criteria.(76) The county education committee adopted its customary mechanism of consulting with the advisory local education sub-committees. By now, however, this tactic could not be trusted by the LEA, largely because it was not trusted by local interested parties. It effectively delayed things for six months, but it also accentuated the widespread concern at the unrepresentative nature of many of these conservatively inclined committees. Most sub-committees denied the existence of sufficient demand, although Labour branches and women's groups petitioned to the contrary in Cheshunt, Barnet and East Barnet.(77) The Cheshunt sub-committee, and indirectly the LEA, were the target of particular scorn from The Schoolmaster, which trusted

"some notice will soon be taken in the locality of this reactionary, anti-educational, undemocratic body, whose proceedings disgrace themselves and their constituents."(78)

Only three sub-committees confirmed the need for nursery schools - St.Albans because the minority of poor families was too great to deny, and Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth where, conversely, deliberate efforts had been made to identify a sufficient number of deserving cases.(79)

In December 1930 the LEA signalled its intentions by informing Welwyn Garden City it had reached the maximum legal amount it could bear in repayment contributions towards new schools, but the looming wider conflict was

defused by the depression.(80) Nevertheless, it was against this sharply divided background, and continuing local debate, that Hertfordshire received the news in 1935 that the provision of nurseries had been resumed by the government "where social conditions make them desirable and justifiable."(81) During that year Watford School Managers and Corporation, and Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth education sub-committees, all requested nursery schools. (82) Howe's hostile response had all the confidence in tone to suggest it reflected perfectly the feelings of the majority of county education committee members. First he demurred at thoughts of makeshift arrangements, then he spoke of the heavy cost of fully-equipped and adequately staffed nursery schools, and finally he doubted whether the social conditions or welfare facilities were sufficiently poor anywhere in Hertfordshire to merit such an investment. (83) Under pressure, the LEA appealed to the Board for clarification of government policy, and the confirmation that the Board "did not consider that there was any area in Hertfordshire where ...[it]... would be at all likely to approve the provision of a Nursery School" seemed to end the matter.(84)

Only Lindgren and Watford openly challenged both the LEA and the Board.(85) In 1936 Watford school managers submitted to the LEA the results of a detailed survey supporting their case for nursery schools in two depressed areas.(86) In the same year, after four years planning and amidst great publicity, a voluntary group opened a new nursery school, albeit in a converted building, in Oxhey - once a village, but now engulfed by Watford.(87) The founders of the Oxhey Nursery Guild were to prove immensely influential, and included local clergy, borough and county councillors, a barrister, an architect, an assistant school medical officer, and the National Nursing Association treasurer. (88) Their objectives were overtly political as well as educational, and were nothing short of establishing a model

of good practice, encouraging imitators, gaining Board recognition, and securing LEA funds.

The Guild was Labour orientated, and justified nursery schools ideologically as "the foundation of all education" rather than seeing them associated solely with offsetting the disadvantages of poverty and neglect. At the opening ceremony, the speakers trod a narrow line between alienating and persuading the LEA. On the one hand, they emphasised that "bad social conditions", which necessitated nurseries, existed "even in our pleasant county", and asserted that modern children had rights which overrode traditional convictions that they "were the absolute property of their parents." (89) On the other hand, they were at pains to reassure critics and clients that far from removing children from their families, nurseries "were giving children back to their parents" by providing all the things to which the well-to-do mother had easy access - "her doctor, her nurse, her cook, good food, a garden and a nursery." (90) They mocked the county council for its consistent failure to find the "necessitous districts", but they remained optimistic that it would take over the nursery once it had justified its existence.

That optimism would have been proved false if the county council had had its way. The Guild's collectivist sentiments were not conducive to county council sympathy, and nor was the strong hint of culpable negligence, and the attitudes of most members - but not all - remained unchanged. In June 1937 the county education committee's Nursery Sub-Committee, formed the previous October to deliberate upon the Watford School Managers' survey, recommended adding a "Nursery Section" to the proposed new school for a poorer district in the borough, only for the Finance Committee to reject the £3,000 expenditure. (91) This non-mandatory initiative had presented an easy and

obvious target, and was one of the few casualties of the wide-ranging, if largely futile, opposition of the Finance Committee to the £1,000,000 budget proposed by the education committee for 1938-39. In the long debate, pent-up frustrations surfaced in violent expressions of class hostility, notably Captain Morris's preference for state-organised eugenics rather than state-subsidised nurseries, and Lindgren's condemnation of most county councillors for retaining their parsimonious "1914" attitudes as a guide to modern elementary school provision.(92)

Nevertheless the intransigent county council was about to be defeated by a combination of pressure group influence and Board intervention - but in a way which led the humiliation to look more like a victory. Early in 1938 the Oxhey Guild went directly to the Board for approval of new building plans and official recognition as a nursery. Senior officials could not fault the detailed application, which obliged them to acknowledge that Hertfordshire did in fact contain "suitable" districts.(93) The Guild was treated with the greatest respect, and its wishes quickly granted.(94) Although there is no evidence of collusion, a similarly detailed application from the Welwyn Garden City Nursery School committee also gained Board favour at this time.(95) They, too, could prove to the Board's satisfaction that a local need existed, and they, too, wanted recognition of their voluntary nursery in order to pressurise the LEA into giving grants, or, preferably, taking the foundation over.(96)

The Board had made its decisions, but gave the LEA every opportunity to appear to be initiating developments. The Board sidetracked the question of its own earlier error of judgement about local conditions, and the county council tacitly acknowledged its bluff had been called and made a virtue out of necessity. The Board formally but

courteously inquired whether the LEA had considered the Oxhey area in the light of Circular 1444, and it noted the "altered conditions" in Welwyn Garden City would probably lead to proposals to establish a nursery there being favourably received.(97) In its turn, the education committee publicly noted that as the Board was "now more favourably disposed to the provision of Nursery Schools than they were two years ago", proposals could be submitted with some chance of success.(98) In June 1938 the education committee resolved to grant Oxhey £100, and to build nursery schools in Watford and Welwyn Garden City, and intimated that an application from Barnet would be favourably received.(99)

Public and private pressure, from both local and national sources, had prevailed over a hostile county council. Nevertheless the final accommodation of the LEA to external demands had been sensitively and skilfully executed by all parties, and certainly the education committee accepted the situation with good grace, as did the full council in due course. Indeed, the suspicion remains, of course, that sympathetic Labour county councillors and education committee members had taken a particular, even guiding, long-term interest in the local campaigns, not least because their success would signal a defeat for paternalism in Hertfordshire as well as a triumph for publicly funded social welfare. In the end it looked as if the LEA still controlled this particular educational development, although in fact the key to this initiative lay in the readiness of militant groups to test the much-vaunted Hertfordshire principle of local district autonomy to its limits.

(iv)

"THIS GIFT FROM THE GODS"

SENIOR SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

By the summer of 1937 the LEA's building programme, encouraged by the 1936 Education Act and Circular 1441, was under way. Many developments were guided by HMI Bloom through his exhaustive assessments of local needs. In February 1936 he had issued a detailed report on the whole county, urging the provision of a series of large senior elementary schools, each with two or three streams and taking pupils from several junior schools. The LEA agreed to very few rural reorganisation schemes, but Bloom had greater success with his urban proposals. During the financial year 1937-38 building work started on new senior elementary schools in Rickmansworth and St.Albans, and plans were approved under the terms of the 1936 Act for similar schools in Baldock, Boreham Wood, Buntingford, East Barnet, Harpenden, Hitchin and a second one in Rickmansworth.(100) During 1938-39 plans were approved for council senior schools in Bushey, Kings Langley, St.Albans, Stevenage and Waltham Cross.(101) Cheshunt was due for a new council senior school in 1939-40, after the rejection of the Anglican "special agreement" school, and further lists stretched tentatively into 1940-41 and 1941-42.(102) All these projects were accompanied by improvements to older all-age schools redesignated as senior schools, and the later 1930s witnessed the provision of a steady stream of gymnasias, assembly halls, laboratories, workshops and Domestic Science rooms.(103) A "gift from the gods" was Sir Joseph Priestley's assessment in November 1937 of the government's 50% grant towards council senior school

building projects, a vision clouded only by the chairman's anxiety whether the county could "put its house in order" before the time limit expired.(104)

Barnet exemplified the pressures and explains Priestley's relief. In 1933 the LEA had planned the borough's next JMI school for 1936-37, a triumph of hope over experience for the economically minded education committee.(105) With estates booming, most older schools overcrowded, several of them proving far too inconveniently sited for expansion, and spare land hard to find, by 1935 the dissatisfied borough castigated the LEA as inefficient, parsimonious and uncaring in failing to keep pace with local growth.(106) Indeed, during these heated years Barnet suspected a Conservative conspiracy operated against it, one protest meeting deciding against appealing to Fremantle, their MP, as he was "too much in touch with the County Council."(107) The 1936 Education Act was supremely well-timed, as by then meetings, resolutions, letters, banner waving, threats of strikes, pressure from Labour branches, and lobbying of county councillors, had obliged a LEA reassessment of the borough's immediate and long-term needs. Barnet, like other major Hertfordshire towns, was concerned with gaining a full range of institutions - senior elementary, technical and secondary - and showed no interest in increasing the proportion of post-primary selective places to non-selective ones. Over the next three years it accepted without question a building programme which contained several elementary schools, including a senior school, and just enlargements to the grammar schools.(108)

New senior elementary schools proliferated, and continued to be built to high standards. They were spacious and well-equipped, and as Bloom commented euphemistically in his 1936 survey of the past and present standards of accommodation for senior pupils in Hertfordshire,

"[the] experience gained from the workings of new Senior Schools in other areas has led to a fresh conception of the standard of accommodation which such schools should possess."(109)

In addition, relentless immigration combined with the rising standards of facilities required in senior schools now obliged the LEA to substantially reorganise major towns it thought it had reorganised already. As mentioned in the previous chapter, such "double" reorganisation had occurred first in St.Albans, largely because the initial attempt had been ill-conceived. In the other major centres of population - Watford and Barnet, for example - it was the accelerating pace of residential and commercial building in the later 1930s which gave the LEA no respite from a constant round of site purchases, school construction, almost immediate expansion, and frequent adjustments in the district reorganisation scheme and the designation of individual schools. The years of leisured discussion with local parties had ended, and the need now was for immediate agreement not timely delay. In a significant step, the financial incentive for local districts to view new schools with circumspection was removed, taking effect from April 1938. Recent changes in parochial boundaries, the new 50% building grant, the hasty creation of a network of large urban senior schools, and the consequent changing pattern of catchment areas, rendered inevitable the demise of the county council's antiquated practice of charging 75% of the capital expenditure upon the parish or parishes served by the new school.(110) Hertfordshire was the last county to abolish the charges, a point which not only reflects the LEA's predilection for minimal expenditure, but also, conversely, its determined policy of respecting local wishes. In a very real sense the abolition marked the move away from local district autonomy towards greater county council control of developments.

From time to time during the mid and late 1930s Hadow reorganisation had to be abandoned in Watford, and both

senior and junior elementary schools reverted to all-age status as short-term solutions to local accommodation crises.(111) In reaction to constant building demands, the policy of constructing large urban junior and infant schools was also abandoned in favour of relatively small buildings satisfying immediate needs as quickly and cheaply as possible - but lending themselves to easy expansion should developments merit it.(112) During the period 1934 to 1939 local expansion was so great that in addition to several enlargements, Watford had three new 320-place JMI schools and a vast new 960-place senior school, and when war broke out another two infants' schools and a "modern" secondary school were in the planning stage.(113)

Undoubtedly the LEA made a determined commitment to the development of sound post-primary elementary education. It was proud of its new senior school buildings, and received much praise for their quality.(114) In addition, this well-publicised and much acclaimed initiative did much to conceal the equally deliberate failure to develop secondary education. Certainly education committee members considered their investment in senior elementary negated any need to provide secondary education for a greater percentage of elementary pupils. Graveson, speaking to the HCTA in 1937, characteristically blurred distinctions by concentrating upon improved standards for senior school buildings rather than improved access to secondary education when claiming how much he "welcomed the fact that the great division which existed between elementary and secondary schools was being bridged."(115)

HMI Bloom, in particular, did not welcome unreservedly the LEA's efforts on behalf of elementary education. He was well aware of the rapidly increasing discrepancy in effort, and challenged it repeatedly. Indeed, his challenges went back several years, highlighting the bias dominating LEA

decisions during the period of massive building projects. In 1934, for example, the rapid growth of elementary education in Watford, the constant if erratic development of technical education there, and the success of its vocationally biased central school, had all conspired to focus attention upon the future development of secondary education in the borough.(116) The disagreement between LEA and HMI over this issue revealed the education committee's resolute adherence to a policy governed by assumptions that in principle few were worthy of secondary education, and that in practice an expansion of that sector would cause a grievous mismatch between appropriate educational experiences and job opportunities. Bloom asserted that although Watford's ratio of 12 secondary school places per 1,000 of the population might seem generous, it did not satisfy the obvious demand for that type of education.(117) In contrast to the education committee's perception of local abilities, he believed that 60% of Watford's central school pupils were self-evidently "of secondary school calibre" despite failing the highly competitive local scholarship examination.(118)

The education committee, and Howe, remained opposed to any expansion of secondary education, defending their policy by arguments tying the secondary curriculum to particular types of cultural backgrounds and potential occupations as tightly as their beliefs bound the elementary curriculum to its targeted clientele. The majority of members retained the conviction that social class was still a prime and valid factor in choosing schools, and considered this custom merited continued respect. For example, throughout the inter-war years local secondary schools customarily accepted children under ten years of age, and many at eight. These were charged the usual fees which amounted to 60% of the full costs with the Board's grant making up the deficit. In 1928 the Board decided that children should attend elementary schools until ten unless their parents were

prepared to defray the full cost of secondary schooling. (119) After a sharp exchange, the LEA defied the Board and accepted as a consequence that these places would be subsidised from the rates. (120) Parental willingness to pay secondary school fees from the earliest possible age was deemed as accurate a criterion of social categorisation as any by the education committee.

The same basic argument led Howe to disagree with Bloom's view that universal compulsory testing in urban schools was preferable to the LEA's customary reliance on parental initiative to enter children for the scholarship examination. (121) The LEA had been convinced by experiences with compulsory testing in Watford that persuading the unwilling or indifferent family of a bright child to accept a place at a secondary school was futile. The child usually left early, and might well have deprived a slightly less able child from a more appreciative and supportive home of a place in a school in which he or she would flourish. (122) The education committee's belief that the elementary and secondary spheres should be kept as separate as possible was reinforced by secondary headteachers as well as the education officer. As mentioned in Chapter Four, they consistently favoured tight controls upon elementary pupils' access to their schools. Characteristically, in the early-1930s they welcomed the substitution of Free Places by Special Places with their accompanying sliding scale of fees to offset scholarship success, and the abolition of maintenance grants for new scholarship holders and their reduction for existing holders. Indeed, it was in the context of welcoming Special Places that one headteacher had asserted 40% of the free placers "were not worth spending money upon." (123) The majority of education committee members were gratified that henceforth only the most committed elementary school families would survive the sacrifices necessary to keep a child at secondary school. (124)

As previous chapters have identified, the vocational purpose of education loomed large in the thoughts of county councillors and education committee members. The practical bias encouraged in elementary schools not only reflected members' wishes regarding the likely employment of their pupils, but also, perversely, justified arguments that very few children could profitably withstand a transfer at eleven or twelve to a very different curriculum. In 1932 Howe used it to support his recommendation that the pressure on secondary schools should be eased by raising the standard of all entrance examinations rather than by providing further accommodation.(125) At a time when many ex-secondary school pupils could not "be absorbed into suitable professions and occupations", he expected any reduction in intake to be first at the expense of the elementary schools. (126) At their conference devoted to admission criteria, fourteen of the fifteen Hertfordshire secondary headteachers agreed, observing the tendency of ex-elementary pupils, narrowly well-versed in the fundamental subjects at eleven, to be overtaken in academic achievement by fee-payers who appeared inferior in tests initially but only because their earlier schooling had included a far richer and broader academic curriculum, including French and Latin.(127)

Throughout the inter-war years elementary and secondary education were perceived as different spheres in Hertfordshire. They had different curricula serving different social classes for different occupations. The introduction of Commerce courses in secondary schools, and the opening of a few "modern" secondary schools, were the exceptions which proved the rule that the two spheres had little in common and, in fact, were being moved further apart by the LEA's policy of intensifying the vocational bias in elementary schools. In this context it is significant that the secondary Commerce courses were deemed the preserve of inferior intellects, and that "modern" secondary schools were provided by the education committee

as a convenient alternative to expanding the number of secondary grammar school places, and as the more appropriate destination of many elementary school scholarship winners. (128) The LEA's response to Bloom's criticisms in 1934 of Watford's secondary school provision revealed the intransigence of its position. It published its own survey eighteen months later in which the grammar school governors, elementary school managers and borough higher education sub-committee fully supported the county's view. (129) All of them considered the current grammar school places adequate, and expansion was limited to the avowedly utilitarian technical school and the belated provision of a "modern" secondary school. (130) Even this expansion was more apparent than real as the central school was redesignated as a senior school and the over-crowded grammar schools reduced in numbers when the "modern" secondary school opened. (131)

Fundamentally the LEA and the secondary headteachers saw the elementary school, and the elementary child's home, as no adequate cultural substitutes for the preparation given by fee-charging schools and middle class homes. As early as 1925 a survey by the LEA left no doubt that the education committee and its officers considered only about 4% of elementary schoolchildren were suitable academically for secondary education. (132) With this figure as an approximate guide, the education committee decided that the next few years were to be spent merely evening out the inequalities in provision by marginally increasing the overall accommodation and scholarship places in grossly underserved areas such as Berkhamsted, Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Hitchin, St. Albans and Stevenage, and ignoring the rest until their expanding population demanded attention. (133) Indeed, despite grandiose claims by the LEA as it undertook this much-publicised expansion that a secondary school place was "the birthright of every English child", only in the 1930s did the percentage of elementary school pupils gaining Free or Special Places begin to rise, and

then modestly.(134) These proportional figures were never issued by the LEA, which concentrated upon publishing "raw" data - the extensions to schools, the new foundations, and the slowly rising number of available awards. Nevertheless they can be calculated from a combination of other annual statistics, and they reveal the success of the LEA's rearguard action to keep the sectors on diverging not converging tracks:-

.....

THE PERCENTAGE OF HERTFORDSHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS
TAKING UP FREE OR SPECIAL PLACES
IN SECONDARY GRAMMAR AND MODERN SCHOOLS 1931-39

.....

KEY:

- Col A - Number of Free or Special Places available.
Col B - Number of Free or Special Places given.
Col C - Number of Free or Special Places awarded to elementary school pupils.
Col D - Average number of elementary schoolchildren aged 11.
Col E - Percentage of elementary schoolchildren gaining Free or Special Places.
Col F - Percentage of elementary schoolchildren admitted to secondary schools nationally (England).

	A	B	C		D	E	F
1931	N/A	N/A	273	Free	5,848	4.66%	9.58%
1932	N/A	N/A	N/A		5,299	-	9.90%
1933	N/A	N/A	266	Special	4,983	5.33%	10.19%
1934	323	301	288	"	4,826	5.96%	11.11%
1935	325	310	291	"	4,661	6.24%	11.82%
1936	309	284	267	"	4,724	5.65%	12.21%
1937	325	325	307	"	4,775	6.42%	12.86%
1938	382	382	363	"	4,722	7.68%	13.45%
1939	399	399	379	"	5,149*	7.36%	N/A

* The 1939 attendance figures were not published in detail, and this figure refers to the group aged 10 in 1938. (135)

.....

As the number of 11+ pupils remained broadly constant, and the aggregate number of awards for both types of secondary schools rose slightly, the great majority of county councillors were more than satisfied with the situation in principle and in practice. Certainly the difference in 1934, 1935 and 1936 between the number of awards available

and the number actually given suggests Howe's recommendation to raise the entry standard was acted upon. Indeed, originally the sharp rise in scholarships in 1934 was not meant to benefit elementary schoolchildren. The county council deliberately created and reserved extra Special Places for pupils from private schools. To members' unconcealed chagrin the Board disallowed such exclusivity, and ironically, as private school pupils failed to pass the examination in sufficient numbers, a few more scholarships fell into the hands of elementary school pupils.(136)

One major repercussion of the policy arising out of these attitudes was the tension suffered in many all-age and junior elementary schools regarding their overt and covert goals. The same scholarship examination usually identified pupils for the central schools and, later, the "modern" schools, as well as the grammar schools, and the combination of great publicity at the new foundations and the continuing scarcity of overall places proportional to the population, rendered competition acute. This heightened the pressures upon the curriculum of the contributing elementary schools.(137) From the mid-1920s the urban elementary schools had been greatly influenced by the growing demand for secondary places, and also by the repercussions of the HCTA's successful campaign for more rigorous and equitable county-wide testing.(138) Inevitably in these circumstances, the introduction of tests demanding specific and general skills of a high order bore heavily upon the elementary schools whose *raison d'être* was already being reinterpreted in very different terms by the LEA. Nevertheless many urban schools began to publicise scholarship successes with pride, although logbooks also record headteachers' private regret at the loss of able pupils and, conversely, the inability of some families to afford to take-up a place.(139) With considerable justification, given the eulogies in newspapers, the attendance of county councillors at prize days, the obvious

favour of parents, and the specific praise of HMIs, some headteachers believed their schools' high reputation, and their own personal and professional standing, rested upon a high number of pupils gaining scholarships each year.(140)

The LEA and HCTA made great efforts - but futile nonetheless - to stop elementary schools giving special attention to scholarship examination candidates. Each party was concerned to improve the fairness of the procedures. However, the LEA had little interest in ensuring the success of elementary children in the tests, especially if it was at the expense of ordinary elementary schoolwork. The HCTA was more concerned to avoid overstraining pupils, to hold in check the influence of the secondary sector on members' schools, and, significantly, to counter any perception of the elementary sector as the inferior sector and ultimately the repository of its own failures at 11+.(141) Neither altering the style of scholarship questions, nor issuing bans on coaching, proved effective deterrents. In 1928 Watford's branch of the NUT condemned the invidious effect of cramming upon enlightened methods of teaching, and over the next few years the HCTA again condemned and the LEA again banned coaching in schools - all sure signs the practice was both prevalent and persistent.(142)

Thus a paradox existed, but one accepted without complaint or question by very nearly everyone - and, indeed, positively approved of by most. The senior elementary schools were by far the LEA's greatest contribution to post-primary education. They were admired, but they were not admired as much as secondary schools, and their very proliferation therefore led junior schools to strive even harder to improve their scholarship success rate. Any tendency towards targeting teaching at the competitive secondary school entrance examination was officially discouraged, but a high pass rate received numerous signals

of approval and few inquiries into exactly how it was achieved. Indeed, upon close examination the admiration of the new senior elementary schools was two-edged. East Barnet illustrates the point. The borough received its new "modern" secondary school and extensions to its technical school before gaining its first new senior elementary school, but it is significant that it was the latter - which would accommodate the bulk of the local children - which was keenly awaited and welcomed locally as very satisfactorily completing the range of schools offering advanced education. (143) As with other senior elementary schools opened in 1938 and 1939 - at Watford, Rickmansworth, St. Albans and Baldock, for example - it was considered a "luxury school", almost indistinguishable from a "modern" secondary school, and marking a "new chapter in elementary education." (144)

More significantly, though, this "new chapter in elementary education" was considered the climactic last chapter in Hertfordshire's educational developments. Throughout the 1930s the NUT and HCTA had asserted the senior schools

"should be regarded as every bit as important as the secondary school or the junior or senior technical school",

and by 1939, at first glance, this seemed to have come to pass. (145) In fact, however, although the senior elementary schools were fast improving in design, construction, facilities and courses, a second glance at the secondary schools quickly revealed the numerous fee-payers, the academic bias, the better qualified staff, the concern for success in public examinations - and their relative scarcity, high public esteem and admission hurdles. In short, the senior elementary schools were deemed more important and more worthy of investment in 1939 than they were a decade earlier, but the eulogies of them were as much a protection of the exclusivity of the secondary schools as they were a genuine welcome for improved elementary education along the lines assiduously developed and closely monitored by the LEA since 1918. Headteachers, governors,

managers, education committee members, county councillors and newspapers editors clearly accepted, and approved, that secondary and senior elementary schools were different in purpose, intake and curriculum, and equally clearly accepted, and approved, the twin facts that the glaring difference in the quality of building and facilities had faded and, along with it, public attention to the inequalities of educational opportunity. Only Lord Salisbury and Captain Morris were totally uncompromising and less than sanguine, not only crying in the wilderness against the cost of the lavish new senior schools, but also warning they would seek to emulate secondary schools, and scorn to remain the training ground for practical rural and urban employment so valued by county councillors.(146)

The year 1939 witnessed an air of great satisfaction in Hertfordshire regarding its range of educational provision, which Salisbury and Morris, for all their prestige, knowledge of county colleagues' predilections and well-chosen arguments incorporating public finance, social class and local employment needs, failed to deflate. Indeed, in March the education committee even viewed the Spens Report (the Consultative Committee's Report on Secondary Education) with equanimity. Not surprisingly, the LEA welcomed the arguments for leaving the grammar schools largely untouched. It believed Hertfordshire had pre-empted the report's major recommendations that all post-primary schools should be secondary in status, varied in type, and allocated according to clear-cut selection procedures, by developing - "during the six years the Consultative Committee have been deliberating" - the "modern" secondary schools, the technical schools and the rural bias in several senior schools, and refining the examination procedures controlling admissions to the first and second of these three groups.(147) Most of all, however, those factors which mattered most to the education committee - vocationally biased education in town and country, the mechanisms for

selecting children between the ages of eleven and thirteen for their post-primary schools, and, equally important, the LEA's retention of control over each of these vital matters - remained untouched. Certainly, for example, the education committee found nothing to criticise in the report's notion of a 100% Special Place system governing admissions to grammar and technical schools. Although that Spring the Spens recommendations, especially the eventual abolition of fees, seemed a reassuringly distant prospect, Hertfordshire's education committee clearly considered the transfer of all post-primary schools to secondary status, with equal funding, was of relatively little consequence compared with the LEA's continuing ability to maintain a variety of post-primary schools, directly influence their curriculum and firmly control their admissions.

The LEA prided itself on doing those three things well. Its urban building programme was progressing apace, and in a wealthy county the rates had suffered only very minor increases. The grammar schools retained their traditional liberal curriculum, and, as far as the elementary schools were concerned, their great rarity value. The burgeoning "modern" secondary schools and technical schools were promoting technical and vocational education along lines welcomed by local employers and parents, as well as county councillors and their admissions, too, were carefully screened to fit students to courses. The central schools were judged far more in terms of their practical and vocational than academic strengths, which had led the schools in Watford, Ware and Hemel Hempstead to be deemed more successful by HMI and LEA than St. Albans central school which, despite all official warnings, adopted a secondary grammar style of education. The combination of high academic success in examination and, during most of the 1930s, parental subjection to a means test, ensured, in the LEA's mind, that only the brightest elementary school children from the most supportive homes entered any of these

selective schools. To the LEA the Hertfordshire Special Place scheme very effectively combined the best in scholastic selection mechanisms in grading elementary school pupils with the best in socio-economic selection procedures in grading their parents.

The ordinary elementary schools had evolved into two very distinct groups - rural and urban - largely as a result of county policies, but each was very successful when judged according to local criteria. The rural schools had stayed mainly all-age but far from neglected, as HMI acknowledged. Their vocational purpose remained clear, and their curriculum effectively blended modern activity methods of learning with more traditional activity methods of occupational training. If anything, their agricultural bias became stronger throughout the inter-war years, and by 1939 there seemed every likelihood that the new rural senior elementary schools, carefully restricted by the LEA to local agricultural centres, would encourage that welcome trend indefinitely. By 1939 urban elementary education was fast being modernised as old schools were redesignated junior or senior and refurbished accordingly, and new schools built to the highest Board standards. Certainly the ad hoc and parsimonious adjustments to local growth in the late 1920s had been replaced by a vigorous long-term programme of good quality junior and senior elementary school building. The 1936 Education Act had been crucial in inculcating this new confidence in education committee members, after several years of acute financial anxiety. It had enabled the LEA to seize the initiative in negotiations with the voluntary schools, and it had encouraged the LEA itself to plan long-term and to build well. In 1939, despite all the pressures associated with immigration, there can be little doubt that Hertfordshire education committee had never felt so sure that its policies were totally secure in both government and local favour, and that it could face the future with the greatest of confidence.

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11. HRO HCC2/164 CP186 HEC 16:1:39 pp48-54.
12. HRO HCC2/158 CP93 HEC 21:6:37 pp14-16.
13. See pages 240-241. The seventh school was in Bishop's Stortford.
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22. Ibid.
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32. HRO HCC2/130 CP81 SRC 30:5:30 pp8-9; HCC2/131 CP152 SRC 12:9:30 pp16-17.
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36. BL W.Telegraph 2:7:37 p6 cols1-2; 17:9:37 p5 cols3-4; 15:10:37 p6 cols1-5; 29:10:37 p7 cols1-4; 25:2:38 p6 cols1-7 & p7 cols1-3; 15:4:38 p7 cols1-5.
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124. BL Herts Mercury 11:11:32 p13 cols1-4.
125. HRO HEd3 7/1 CEO Ann Rep 31:3:32 pp7-8.
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127. HRO HCC2/140 CP180 HEC 20:1:33 pp69-71.
128. BL Herts Mercury 18:8:33 p7 col3; Herts Advertiser 20:4:34 p10 col2; HEd3 7/1 CEO Ann Reps 31:3:33 p24 & 31:3:34 pp10-11. In St.Albans the LEA secured from the Board a reduction in Special Places at the Boys' Grammar School from 25% to 20% when the Modern Secondary School opened - HCC2/160 CP205 HEC 17:1:38 pp97-99.
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136. HRO HCC2/142 CP75 HEC 26:6:33 pp56-57; HCC2/144 CP176 HEC 19:1:34 pp86-89; HCC2/145 CP39 HEC 13:4:34 pp66-67; HCC2/151 CP125 HEC 30:9:35 pp64-65; HCC2/155 CP134 2:10:36 pp82-83.
137. HRO HCC2/105 CP39 HEC 31:3:24 pp87-90.
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140. Ibid. St.Mary's CE School, Hitchen, was a striking example - see HRO HEd2 7/16 6:1:19, 17:7:19, 9:7:20, 23:12:21, 22:7:26, 3:5:28, 19:7:28, 29:7:29, 21:12:32 & HMI reports received 28:12:20, 27:6:24, 28:3:28; BL Herts Express 24:12:27 p1 cols6-7, 29:12:28 p6 cols3-4, 27:12:30 p6 cols6-7, 7:7:34 p7 cols3-5.
141. HRO HCC2/105 CP39 HEC 31:3:24 pp87-90; HCC2/108 CP187 HESC 8:12:24 pp7-13; HCC2/135 CP143 HESC 18:9:31 pp1-6; HCC2/136 CP186 HESC 30:11:31 pp1-8.
142. BL WH Observer 14:7:28 p7 cols3-5; Herts Advertiser 26:10:28 p12 col3, 2:11:28 p13 col4; Herts Express 23:1:32 p9 col2; H&E Observer 24:12:32 p6 cols6-7.
143. BL Barnet Press 4:4:36 p9 col1, 19:6:37 p7 cols2-4, 23:10:37 p9 cols1-2, 19:11:38 p10 cols5-8, 6:5:39 p11 cols3-4; HRO HCC2/161 CP28 HEC 8:4:38 pp21-22; HEd3 7/1 CEO Ann Rep 31:3:39 pp2-5.
144. BL Barnet Press 6:5:39 p11 cols 3-4; Citizen 6:10:39 p3 cols2-5.
145. BL Herts Advertiser 18:3:32 p15 col1.
146. BL Herts Mercury 12:5:39 p13 cols1-3; Barnet Press 13:5:39 p11 cols4-5.
147. HRO HCC2/165 CP25 HEC 31:3:39 pp91-95. In preparation, the Hertfordshire designation "....Modern School" was replaced by "....County School" to avoid confusion with the Consultative Committee's use of "modern" which covered central and senior elementary schools - HRO HCC2/167 CP131 HEC 4:10:39 pp142-143.

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1.2 HERTFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE: SCHOOL LOGBOOKS

Hed1 1/2, 1/3 Anstey CE MI School.
Hed1 4/2 Ayot St.Peter CE MI School.
Hed1 11/1 East Barnet, Victoria Road CC Girls' School.
Hed1 13/2 Bengoe, Waterford CE MI School.
Hed1 17/2, 17/3 Buckland CE MI School.
Hed1 18/1, 18/2 Clothall CE MI School.
Hed1 19/2 Digswell CE MI School.
Hed1 20/1, 20/2 Eastwick CE MI School.
Hed1 22/1, 22/2 Gilston, St.Mary's CE MI School.
Hed1 23/5 Harpenden CC MI School.

Hed1 24/2 Kinsbourne Green CE MI School.
Hed1 25/1 Harpenden, St.John's CE Infants' School.
Hed1 27/1, 27/2 Hemel Hempstead, Piccotts End CC Mixed School.
Hed1 28/2, 28/3 Hemel Hempstead, Queen Street Infants School.
Hed1 29/2 Hemel Hempstead, Two Waters Royal British School.
Hed1 33/2, 33/3 Hinxworth CC MI School.
Hed1 35/3, 35/4 Hitchin, St.Saviour's CE Infants' School.
Hed1 38/3 Kelshall CE MI School.
Hed1 39/3 Kimpton, Peter's Green CE MI School.
Hed1 44/3, 44/6 Norton CE MI School.
Hed1 43/2 Meesden CE MI School.
Hed1 45/2 Brent Pelham CE MI School.
Hed1 48/1 Rushden Parochial School.
Hed1 53/2 St.Albans, Bricket Wood CE MI School.
Hed1 63/1 Watford, St.Mary's CE Girls' School.
Hed1 66/1 Wyddial CE MI School.
Hed1 67/1 Great Wymondley CE MI School.
Hed1 70/1 Little Berkhamsted CE MI School.
Hed1 71/1 Hoddesdon, High Street CE MI School.
Hed1 72/1 Wallington CE MI School.
Hed1 74/2 New Barnet, Potter's Road CE Mixed School.
Hed1 75/2 Sacombe CE MI School.
Hed1 76/1 Sandon CE MI School.
Hed1 78/1 Puckeridge CE MI School.
Hed1 79/1 St.Albans CC Girls' Central School & Pupil-Teacher Centre.
Hed1 80/1 Hatfield Hyde CE MI School.
Hed1 81/1 Ayot St.Lawrence CE MI School.
Hed1 82/1 Newnham CE MI School.
Hed1 87/6 St.Albans, St.Stephen's Frogmore, Colney Street CE MI School.
Hed1 83/3, 83/4 Pirton CC MI School.
Hed1 88/2 Hertford, Cowper Testimonial Boys' School.
Hed1 93/4 Hoddesdon CE Boys' School.
Hed1 94/9, 94/10 Royston, Queen's Road CC MI School.
Hed1 96/1 Watford, Callow Land CC Boys' School.
Hed1 96/2 Watford, Callow Land CC Junior Boys' School.
Hed1 96/3 Watford, Callow Land CC Girls' School.
Hed1 96/4 Watford, Callow Land CC Infants' School.
Hed1 98/3 Sawbridgeworth, Fawbert & Barnard CC Girls' School.
Hed1 98/4, 98/5 Sawbridgeworth, Fawbert & Barnard CC Infants' School.
Hed1 98/6, 98/7 Sawbridgeworth, Fawbert & Barnard CC Boys' School.
Hed1 100/5, 100/6 High Wych CE MI School.
Hed1 102/2 Much Hadham, St.Andrew's CE Boys' School.
Hed1 102/4 Much Hadham, St.Andrew's CE Girls' School.
Hed1 102/6 Much Hadham, St.Andrew's CE Infants' School.
Hed1 103/5 Bishop's Stortford, St.Michael's CE Infants' School.
Hed1 106/3 Bishop's Stortford, St.Michael's CE Girls' School.
Hed1 107/5 Stapleford CE MI School.

HEd1 108/2, 108/3, 108/4 Stanstead Abbots CE Mixed School.
 HEd1 108/6, 108/7 Stanstead Abbots CE Infants' School.
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 HEd1 113/5 Wareside CE MI School.
 HEd1 113/15, 113/16 Hertingfordbury, Cowper Endowed School.
 HEd1 119/3 Waltham Cross, Alexandra National School.
 HEd1 134/9 Ickleford CE MI School.
 HEd1 169/3, 169/4 Rickmansworth, Croxley Green National Boys' School.
 HEd1 169/11, 169/12, 169/13 Rickmansworth, Croxley Green National Senior School.
 HEd1 173/4 Rickmansworth, Mill End CC Senior School.
 HEd1 188/5, 188/6 Hatfield, National Boys' School.
 HEd1 192/5 Holwell, Rand's Charity MI School.

 HEd2 1/2 Barnet, Arkley CE MI School.
 HEd2 6/7, 6/8 Hitchin, St. Andrew's CE MI School.
 HEd2 7/16 Hitchin, St. Mary's CE Senior Mixed School.
 HEd2 17/13 Hitchin, St. Mary's CE Junior & Infants' School.
 HEd2 23/1 Letchworth, Pixmore CC Junior Mixed School.
 HEd2 24/3, 24/4 West Hyde CC Mixed School.
 HEd2 27/1 St. Albans, Garden Fields CC Girls' School.
 HEd2 27/2 St. Albans, Garden Fields CC Junior Mixed School.
 HEd2 35/1 Watford CC Central School.
 HEd2 40/1 Hertford, Longmore CC Senior Mixed School.

1.3 HERTFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE: OTHER EDUCATION FILES

HEd1 10/1 Barnet, Wood Street Housecraft Centre: Timetables and Syllabuses.
 HEd1 40/1 Knebworth, London Road CC MI School: Managers' minute book.
 HEd1 64/16 Watton-at-Stone CE MI School: Folder of pupils' work regarding farm visits 1936-37
 HEd1 101/7, 101/8, 101/10 Wilstone CE MI School: Collections of photographs and newspaper cuttings.
 HEd1 134/18 Ickleford CE MI School: Lesson notebook of M.P. Leonard 1927.
 HEd1 134/23 Ickleford CE MI School: Collection of HCC Circulars and related letters.
 HEd1 169/14 Rickmansworth, Croxley Green National Senior School: Examination papers for Free and Special Places at Watford Grammar School and entry to Watford Central School.
 HEd1 169/35 Rickmansworth, Croxley Green National Senior School: Schemes of work and timetables, 1926.
 HEd1 192/56 Holwell, Rand's Charity MI School: Series of graded and illustrated object lessons, early 1920s.

1.4 UNIVERSITY OF READING

Rural History Centre: Hertfordshire NFU - Captain Morris file.

2. PRIMARY SOURCES : PRINTED

2.1. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

County Education Committee Papers: BEC 1/30-1/44 and 1/246

2.2 ESSEX RECORD OFFICE

County Education Committee Papers: ERO 106

2.3 HERTFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

County Council and County Education Committee Papers

HEd4 20-27 inclusive (issued March 1914 to February 1922)
HCC2 97-108 inclusive (issued March 1922 to February 1925)
HEd4 28 (issued March 1925 to February 1926)
HCC2 113-168 inclusive (issued March 1926 to February 1940)

HEd3 7/1 Chief Education Officer's Annual Reports
1928-29 to 1939-40.

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County Reports for Hertfordshire, and Occupations,
Classification and Tables.

Board of Education: Annual Reports 1918-19 to 1926-27 and
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Ministry of Education: Education 1900-1950.

Board of Education: Reorganisation of Public Elementary
Schools in England & Wales (List 49) 1933-34, 1935-36,
1937-38.

Board of Education: Annual Reports of the Chief Medical Officer 1918 to 1938, and 1945.

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- Number 43 Humanism in the Continuation School 1921
- Number 46 Rural Education: Adaptation of Instruction to the Needs of Rural Areas - a Survey of the present position 1926
- Number 60 The New Prospect in Education 1928
- Number 63 Memorandum on Examinations for Scholarships and Free Places in secondary Schools 1928, and Supplement 1936
- Number 64 Education for Industry and Commerce 1929
- Number 80 School Playing Fields 1930
- Number 83 Memorandum on the Place of Junior Technical Schools in the Educational System 1930
- Number 86 Suggestions for the Planning of New Buildings for Secondary Schools 1931
- Number 89 Memorandum on the Teaching of Science in Senior Schools 1932
- Number 93 An Experiment in Rural Education 1933
- Number 94 An Outline of the Structure of the Educational System in England & Wales 1939
- Number 99 Education in the Countryside 1934
- Number 100 Public Education in England & Wales 1934
- Number 101 Senior School Mathematics 1938
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- Number 107 Suggestions for the Planning of Buildings for Public Elementary Schools 1938
- Number 111 A Review of Junior Technical Schools in England 1937

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Buckinghamshire Advertiser and Aylesbury News

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Hertfordshire and Essex Observer

Hertfordshire Express

Hertfordshire, Hemel Hempstead Gazette

Hertfordshire Mercury

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Times Educational Supplement

Weekly Telegraph for Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt & District

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